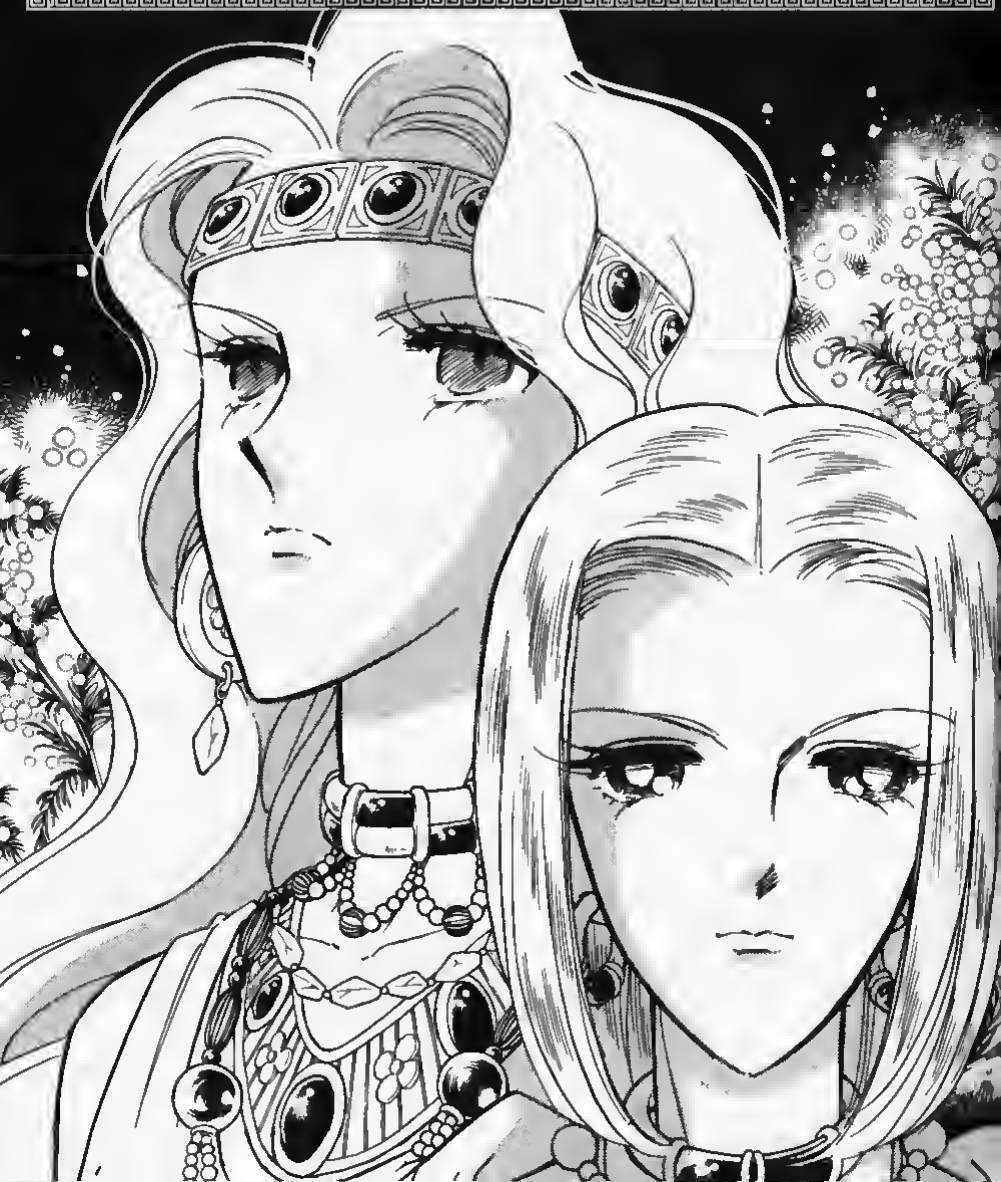
VIZ media
shôjo

RED RIVER™

16 story and art by **Chie Shinohara**

RED RIVER™

vol.16



Story Thus Far:

Mursili II
The former Crown Prince Kail, now king of the Hittite Empire.

Yuri
A Japanese schoolgirl magically transported to the ancient Hittite Empire.

Queen Nakia
Kail's stepmother, an evil sorceress determined to see her own son on the Hittite throne.

Yuri, a typical Japanese teenager, is sucked into a puddle and emerges in the ancient Hittite Empire! Evil Queen Nakia has drawn Yuri across time and space to be a sacrifice to her god, Teshub. Rescued by the handsome but arrogant Prince Kail, Yuri falls in love with him and willingly gives up all chance to return home. Believed to be the incarnation of the war goddess Ishtar by the Hittite people, Yuri strives to live up to their hopes and her own dreams by supporting Kail, who has now assumed the Hittite throne.

Yuri bears up as best she can under the harassment of the princesses in Kail's seraglio, but one finally goes too far by putting scorpions in Yuri's bed. Knowing this could have endangered His Majesty, Yuri tells the princesses off in no uncertain terms. The princesses are cowed, and Yuri at last gains control of the seraglio.

Later, Kail and Yuri learn that Nakia has sent her black water to one of the princesses. The question is, which one? Thinking it's an attempt on Yuri's life, they're shocked when three princesses are murdered instead, each in a way that casts suspicion on Yuri. But when another princess dies after Yuri is taken into custody, Yuri figures out that Nakia has lost control of her assassin by inadvertently unleashing the woman's own feelings of jealousy. Playing on this, Yuri flirts with Kail in the presence of the three surviving princesses, which causes Princess Selto to fly into a rage. She confesses to the murders and, thwarted in her attempt to escape, grabs Yuri's hand and leaps to certain death over a wall. Kail uses his magic to cushion their fall, but when he and his men rush downstairs they find only Selto. Yuri, for her part, finds herself in a storeroom with Rusafa, who is acting very strangely.

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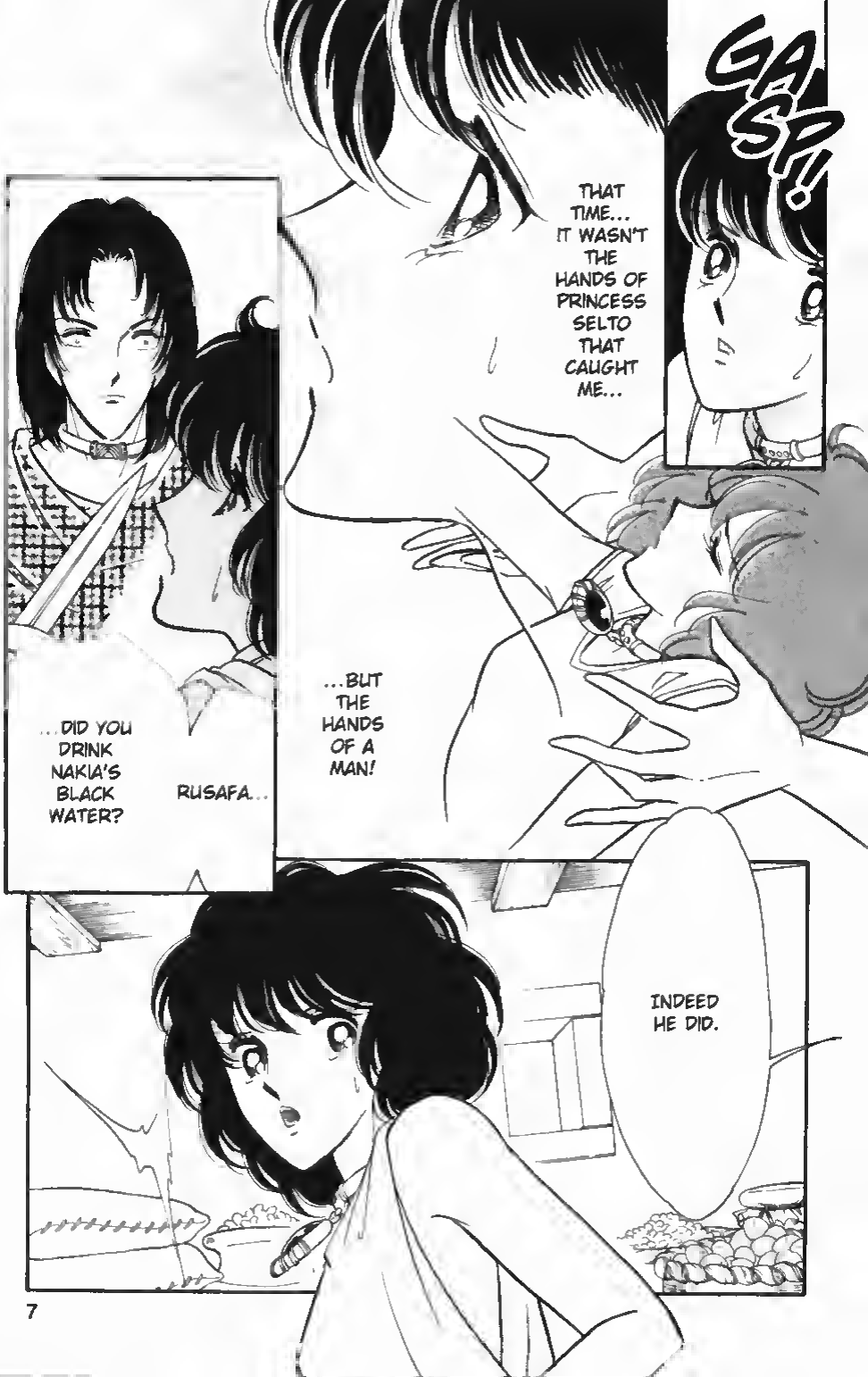
THIS IS WRONG!
THIS ISN'T THE RUSAFA I KNOW!
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HIM?


GASP!
THAT TIME... IT WASN'T THE HANDS OF PRINCESS SELTO THAT CAUGHT ME...
...BUT THE HANDS OF A MAN!
...DID YOU DRINK NAKIA'S BLACK WATER?
RUSAFA...
INDEED HE DID.

WE SENT ENOUGH BLACK WATER...
...TO PUT TWO PEOPLE UNDER OUR CONTROL.
URHI!
THAT'S RIGHT, ISHTAR.
LONG TIME NO SEE.

I GET IT.
YOU GAVE RUSAFA THE BLACK WATER IN ORDER TO TAKE REVENGE ON ME.
SO...
...YOU'RE STILL ALIVE.
YES.
I DID, HOWEVER, LOSE AN EYE THAT DAY.
...I GAVE HIM NOTHING.
NO, ISHTAR...
WHAT?
RUSAFA DREW THE BLACK WATER TO HIMSELF.

IN THE CASE OF PRINCESS SELTO...
...IT WAS ATTRACTED TO THE HATRED AND JEALOUSY SHE FELT TOWARD YOU.
BUT IT WAS ALSO ORDERED TO FIND AND TAKE OVER SOMEONE WHO LOVES YOU DEEPLY.
...SO WE THOUGHT IT WOULD FIND ONE OF THE THREE SISTERS.
WE KNEW HIS MAJESTY'S MAGIC WOULD PROTECT HIM..

...
ARE YOU SAYING THAT'S... RUSAFA?
SOMEONE WHO LOVES ME?
...TO PLACE HER SON ON THE THRONE, BUT SHE'S BEEN THWARTED AGAIN AND AGAIN! WHAT MAKES HER PERSIST?
I KNOW SHE HOPES TO USE MY DEATH...
WHY IS THE QUEEN DOWAGER SO OBSESSED?
WHY, URHI?

ISH-TAR...
...DID YOU EVER HEAR ME MENTION THE QUEEN DOWAGER'S NAME IN CONNECTION WITH THIS PLOT?
LET ME ASK YOU THIS, THEN...
...WHY DO YOU REMAIN SO FAITHFUL TO HER?
I SEE.
YOU'RE STILL TRYING TO PROTECT HER.
SHE'S BETRAYED YOU AT LEAST ONCE, AND WOULD NO DOUBT DO IT AGAIN. WHAT DO YOU POSSIBLY OWE HER?

ISHTAR..
...YOU'D BEST FOCUS ON YOUR OWN SITUATION.
I HAVEN'T BROUGHT YOU HERE...
...TO MAKE SMALL TALK.
YOU'RE STILL PLANNING TO BEHEAD ME?
PRINCESS YURI!
PRINCESS YURI!
RYUI! AND SHALA!
RUSAFA, GO!
UNGH...
SQUEAK!

RUSTLE
RUSAFA!
DID YOU FIND PRINCESS YURI?
NO...
...SHE'S NOT HERE.
ALL RIGHT.
WE'LL KEEP LOOKING.
PRINCESS YURI!
IF YOU CAN, PLEASE ANSWER US!
RUSAFA!

DID YOU FIND YURI?
BUT NO LUCK!
YOUR MAJESTY! WE'VE LOOKED AND LOOKED!

QUEEN DOWAGER!
WHERE'S YURI? WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH HER?
YOUR EXCEL-LENCY...
...WHAT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT?
RETURN HER TO ME!
AND I KNOW YOU'RE BEHIND IT!
YURI'S DISAPPEARED!
THESE MURDERS HAVE RATTLED YOU, YOUR EXCELLENCY!

...WHAT THIS IS ABOUT, SO...
YOU AND I BOTH KNOW...
VERY WELL.
...I MUST INSIST THAT YOU REMAIN IN MY PALACE.
SHUMP
...UNTIL YURI SHOWS UP, UNHARMED...
LET ME REMIND YOU THAT....
SUCH INSOLENCE!
I AM THE QUEEN DOWAGER OF THIS EMPIRE! I GO WHERE I CHOOSE!

...I AM THE KING OF THIS EMPIRE...
...AND I AM HERE, NOT ON SOME DISTANT BATTLEFIELD, YOU WILL DO AS I SAY.
A DECREE?
ISSUE A DECREE IN MY NAME.
...
CHAIRMAN AYGIL.
Y...YES SIR.

...AND TO WISH THE SAFE RETURN OF OUR ISHTAR, WHOM TESHUP GAVE US TO AID US IN THESE TIMES.
IN THE NAME OF KING MURSILI II, A PUBLIC PRAYER WILL BE OFFERED TO THE GOD TESHUP...
...TO CALM US AFTER THE RECENT TRAGEDIES IN THE PALACE...
GRAB
IF...
...YURI IS NOT RETURNED...

...UN-HARMED...
...A NOBLE SACRIFICE WILL BE MADE TO TESHUP.
JUST ISSUE THE DECREE, CHAIRMAN.
YES SIR!
HUH?
RUSTLE
URH! WILL UNDER-STAND WHAT I MEAN.
...I DON'T GET WHAT—
SIR! I...
YOU CAN'T INTIMIDATE ME.
I KNOW VACUOUS POSTURING WHEN I SEE IT.

...BUT DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT MY WILL IS UNEQUAL TO MY WORD?
MOTHER..
...THE CRUELTY OF KINGS WHO HAVE FALLEN IN LOVE WITH THEIR CONCUBINES IS LEGENDARY. YOU MAY DISDAIN ME...

FWAP
IF YURI DOESN'T RETURN SOON..
...YOUR SEVERED HEAD WILL HANG ON ONE OF THE CITY WALLS.
WHICH WILL IT BE, MOTHER?

DID YOU HEAR? ISHTAR IS MISSING!
YES, I HEARD.
I HOPE SHE COMES BACK TO US SOON.
HIS MAJESTY IS GOING TO OFFER A PRAYER AT THE MAIN TEMPLE FOR HER SAFE RETURN.
MAAH
MAAH
MAAH
MAAH
MAAH
WHEN WILL WE KNOW WHO'LL BE OUR NEW QUEEN?
THERE HAVE BEEN TOO MANY TRAGEDIES WITHIN OUR ROYAL FAMILY LATELY.

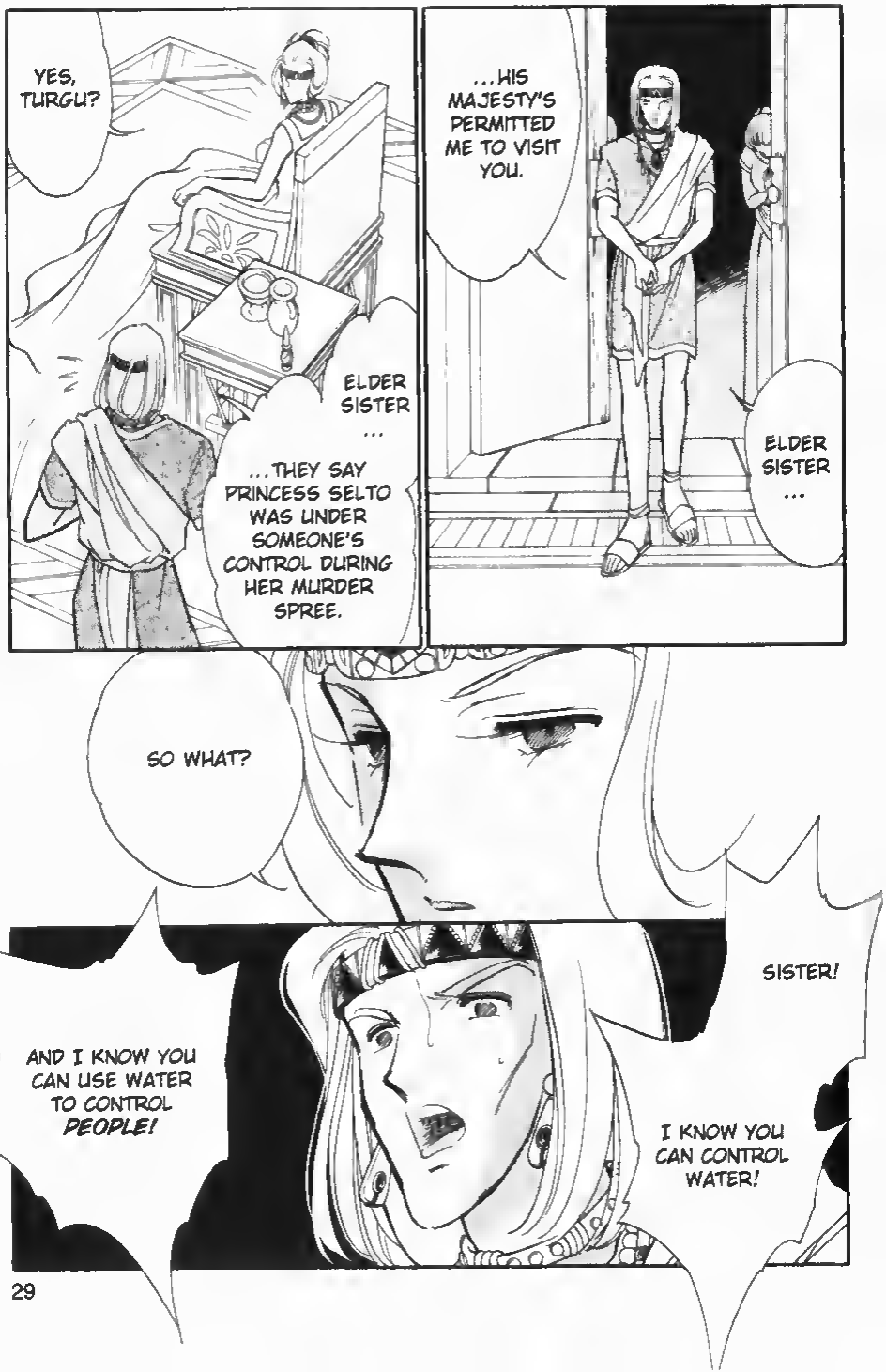
HIS MAJESTY IS CERTAINLY A BOLD MAN!
HIS MAJESTY SAYS HE INTENDS TO SACRIFICE A PERSON...
...OF NOBLE BIRTH TO THE GOD TESHUP IF ISHTAR DOESN'T RETURN. THE TOWNSPEOPLE ARE MAKING A BIG FUSS ABOUT IT.
URHI, YOU...
...HAVEN'T ANSWERED MY QUESTION YET!
WHAT DO YOU GAIN BY IT?
WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO DO AFTER ENTHRONING PRINCE JUDA?
WHY ARE YOU LOYAL TO THE QUEEN DOWAGER?

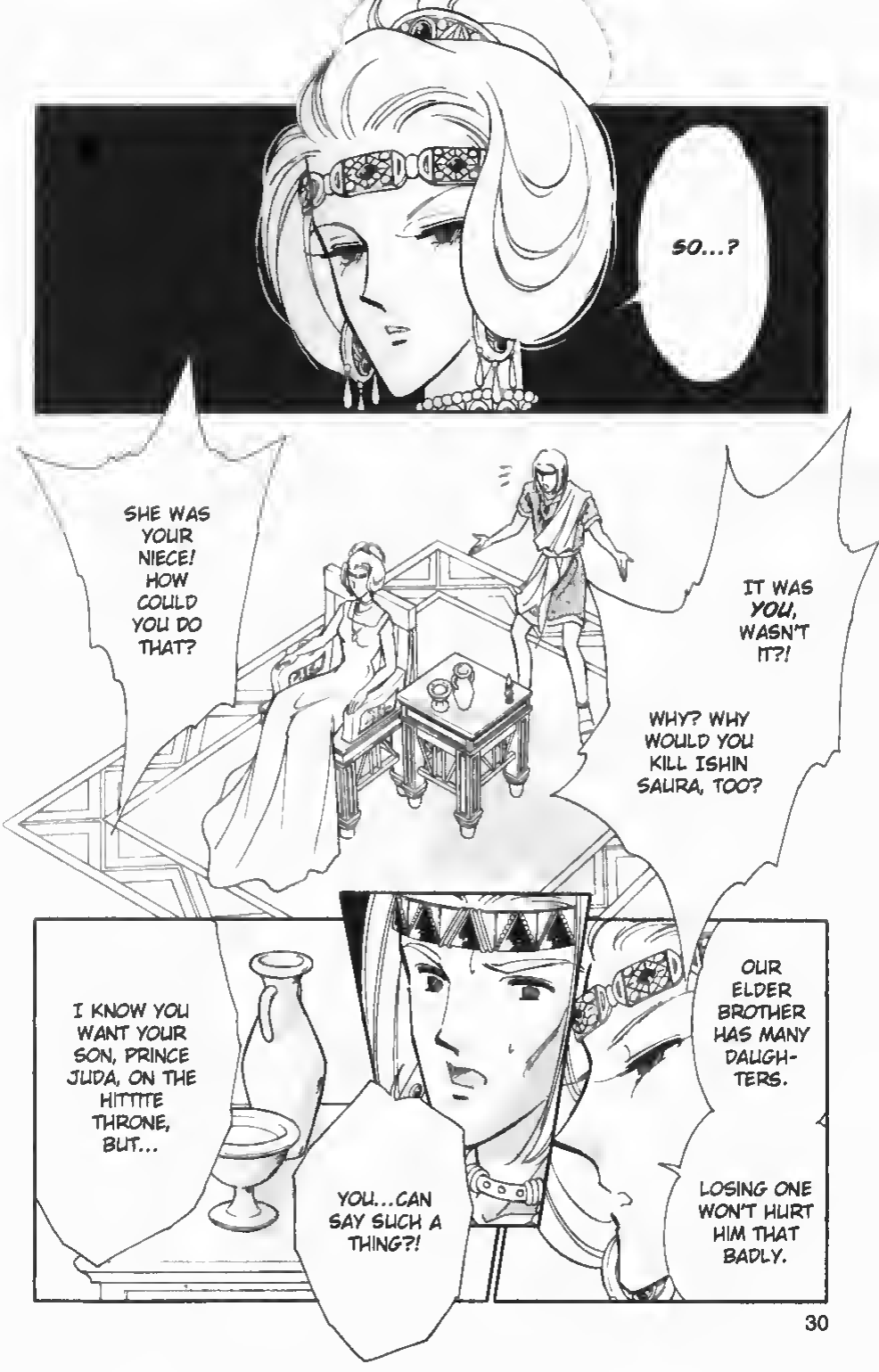
YOU'RE RIGHT.
THAT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS.
YOU'RE RIGHT, BUT...
RUSTLE
RUSAFA!
STOP HER!
DASH

RUSAFA!
LET ME GO!
SNAP OUT OF IT!
GRAB
LET ME GO, YOU BEAST!
DON'T RESIST!

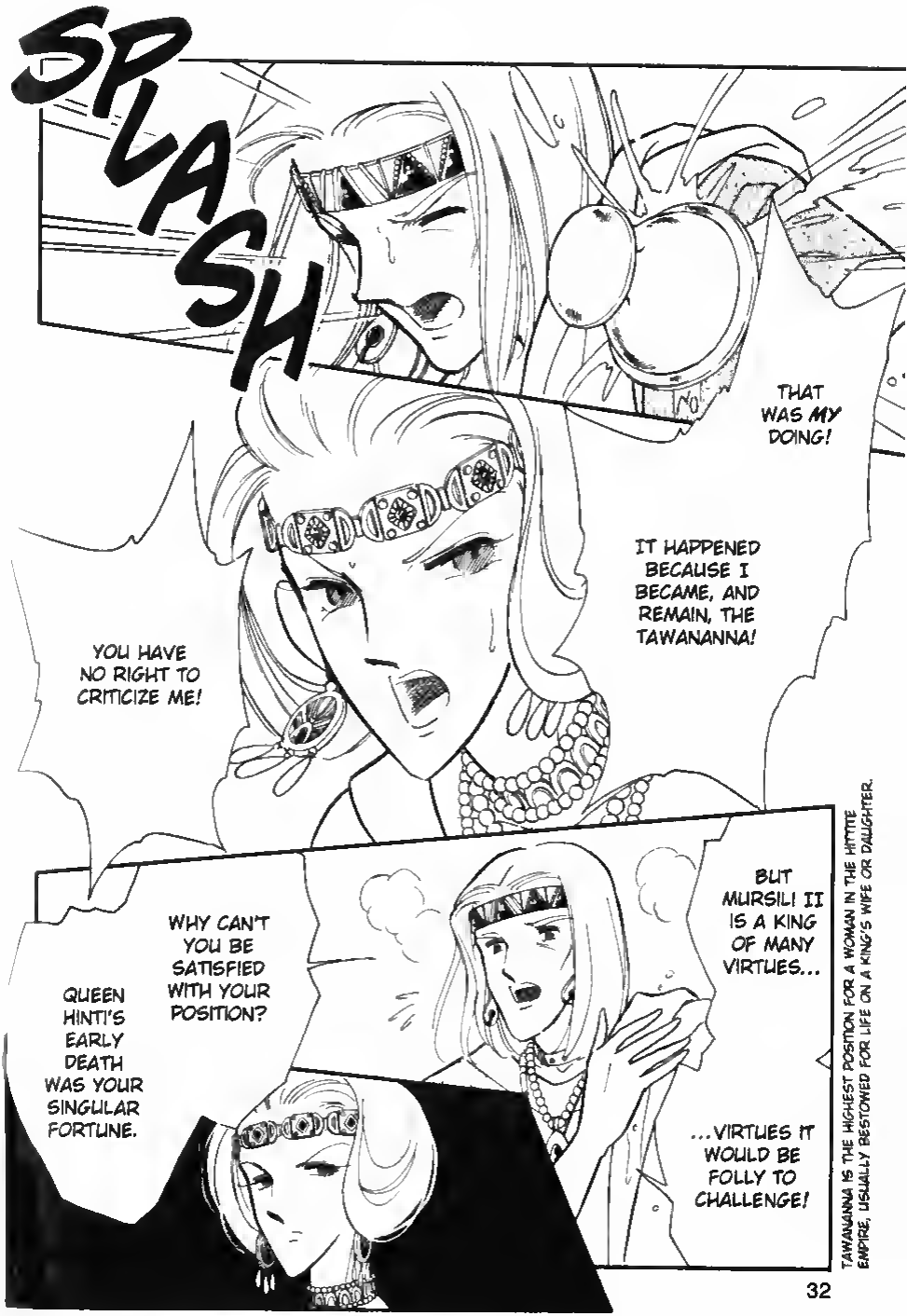
MY GOD...ALL THOSE SCARS!

KNOCK
KNOCK
KNOCK


YES, TURGU?
ELDER SISTER ...
...THEY SAY PRINCESS SELTO WAS UNDER SOMEONE'S CONTROL DURING HER MURDER SPREE.
...HIS MAJESTY'S PERMITTED ME TO VISIT YOU.
ELDER SISTER ...
SO WHAT?
AND I KNOW YOU CAN USE WATER TO CONTROL *PEOPLE!*
SISTER!
I KNOW YOU CAN CONTROL WATER!


SO...?
SHE WAS YOUR NIECE! HOW COULD YOU DO THAT?
IT WAS *YOU*, WASN'T IT?!
WHY? WHY WOULD YOU KILL ISHIN SAURA, TOO?
I KNOW YOU WANT YOUR SON, PRINCE JUDA, ON THE HITTITE THRONE, BUT...
YOU...CAN SAY SUCH A THING?!
OUR ELDER BROTHER HAS MANY DAUGHTERS.
LOSING ONE WON'T HURT HIM THAT BADLY.

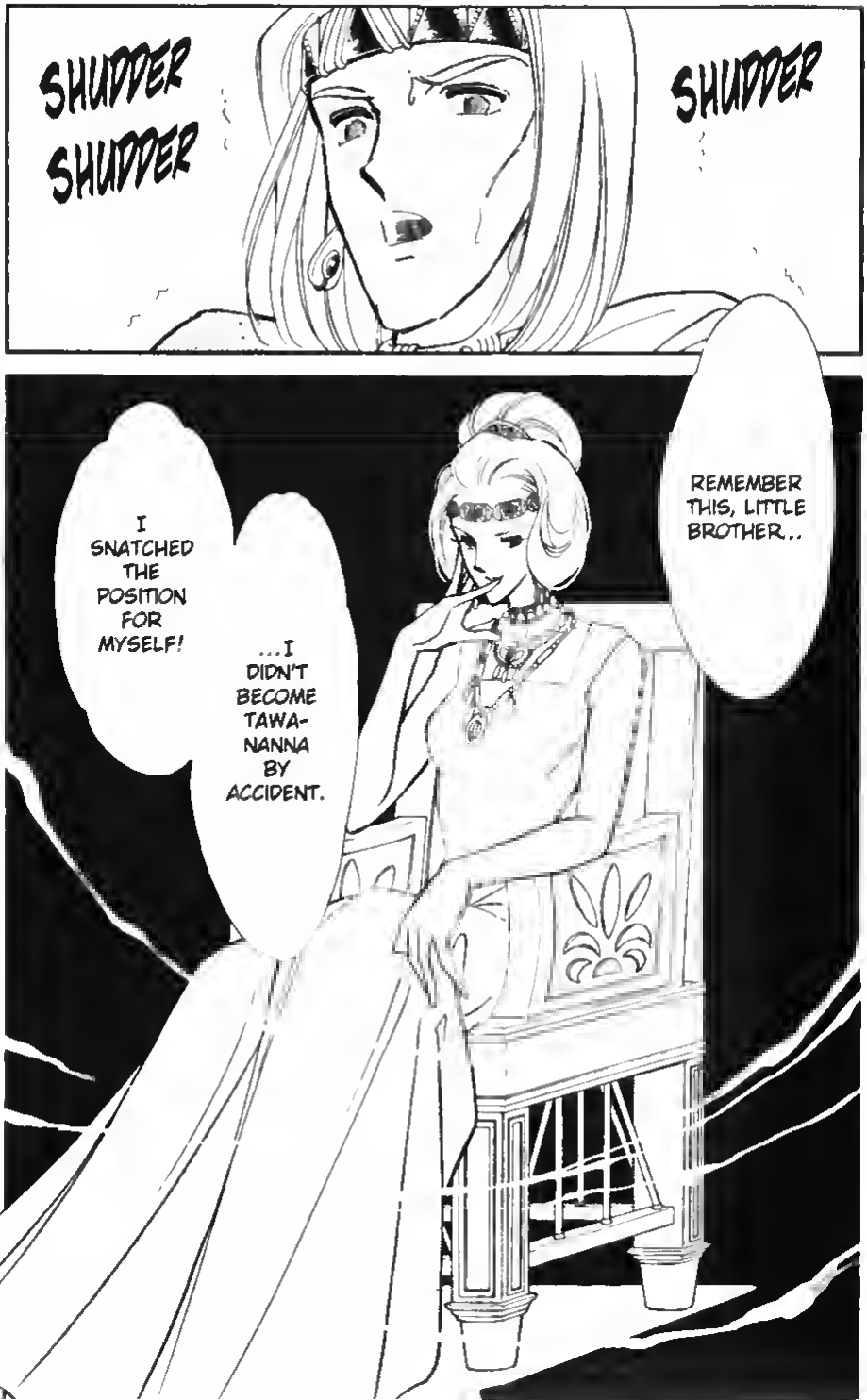
THERE COULD EVEN BE WAR BETWEEN THE TWO NATIONS!
...DON'T YOU SEE WHAT COULD HAPPEN TO OUR COUNTRY, BABYLONIA...
... IF THE PEOPLE FIND OUT WHAT YOU'VE DONE? THE HITTITES WILL SUSPEND THEIR AID!
YOU'RE RIGHT.
BABYLONIA WAS ABLE TO EMERGE FROM A PERIOD OF DECLINE BECAUSE OF THE HITTITES' HELP.
THE HITTITE EMPIRE NOT ONLY OFFERED PROTECTION BUT PROVIDED BABYLONIA WITH JEWELRY AND IRON TOOLS.


SPLASH
THAT WAS MY DOING!
IT HAPPENED BECAUSE I BECAME, AND REMAIN, THE TAWANANNA!
YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO CRITICIZE ME!
BUT MURSILI II IS A KING OF MANY VIRTUES...
...VIRTUES IT WOULD BE FOLLY TO CHALLENGE!
WHY CAN'T YOU BE SATISFIED WITH YOUR POSITION?
QUEEN HINTI'S EARLY DEATH WAS YOUR SINGULAR FORTUNE.

TAWANANNA IS THE HIGHEST POSITION FOR A WOMAN IN THE HITTITE EMPIRE, USUALLY BESTOWED FOR LIFE ON A KING'S WIFE OR DAUGHTER.

HOW SO?
YOU ARE SO NAIVE, LITTLE BROTHER.
E...ELDER SISTER, YOU...
...DON'T MEAN TO SAY YOU...
DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE IT WAS MERE FATE THAT ENDED QUEEN HINTI'S LIFE?
DO YOU THINK FORTUNE ALONE MADE ME TAWA-NANNA?

CAN IT BE SO...?
...KILLED QUEEN HINTI?
KING MURSILI'S MOTHER?
SMIRK


SHUDDER
SHUDDER
SHUDDER
REMEMBER THIS, LITTLE BROTHER..
...I DIDN'T BECOME TAWA-NANNA BY ACCIDENT.
I SNATCHED THE POSITION FOR MYSELF!

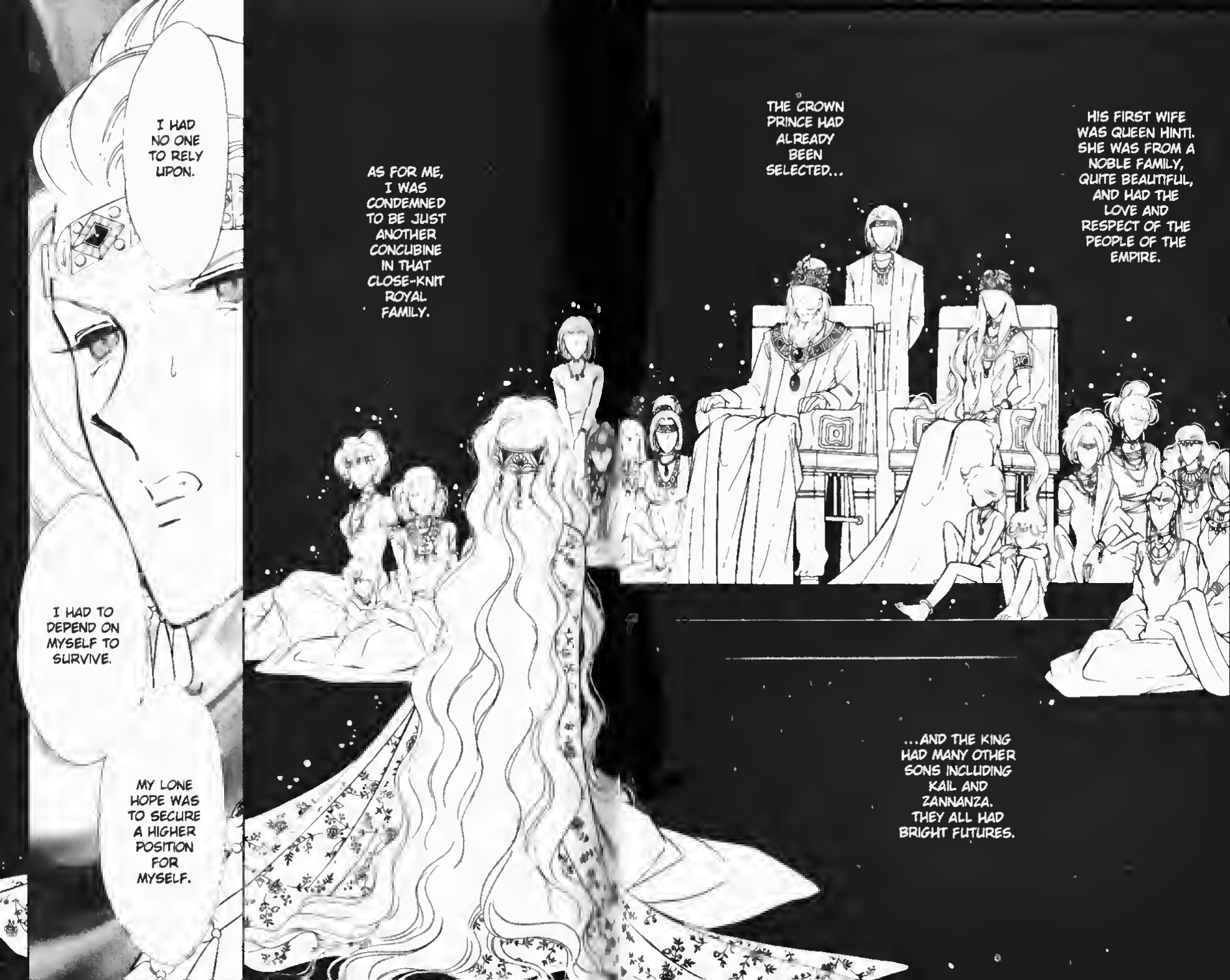
YOU SEE...
...ARNU-WANDA II...
IT SHOCKS YOU, DOES IT?
THEN LET ME GIVE YOU THE COMPLETE PICTURE.
KLINK
SHIVER
SHIVER
YOU KILLED THE FORMER QUEEN SO YOU COULD...
THAT IS A HORRIBLE SIN, MY SISTER!
SHIVER

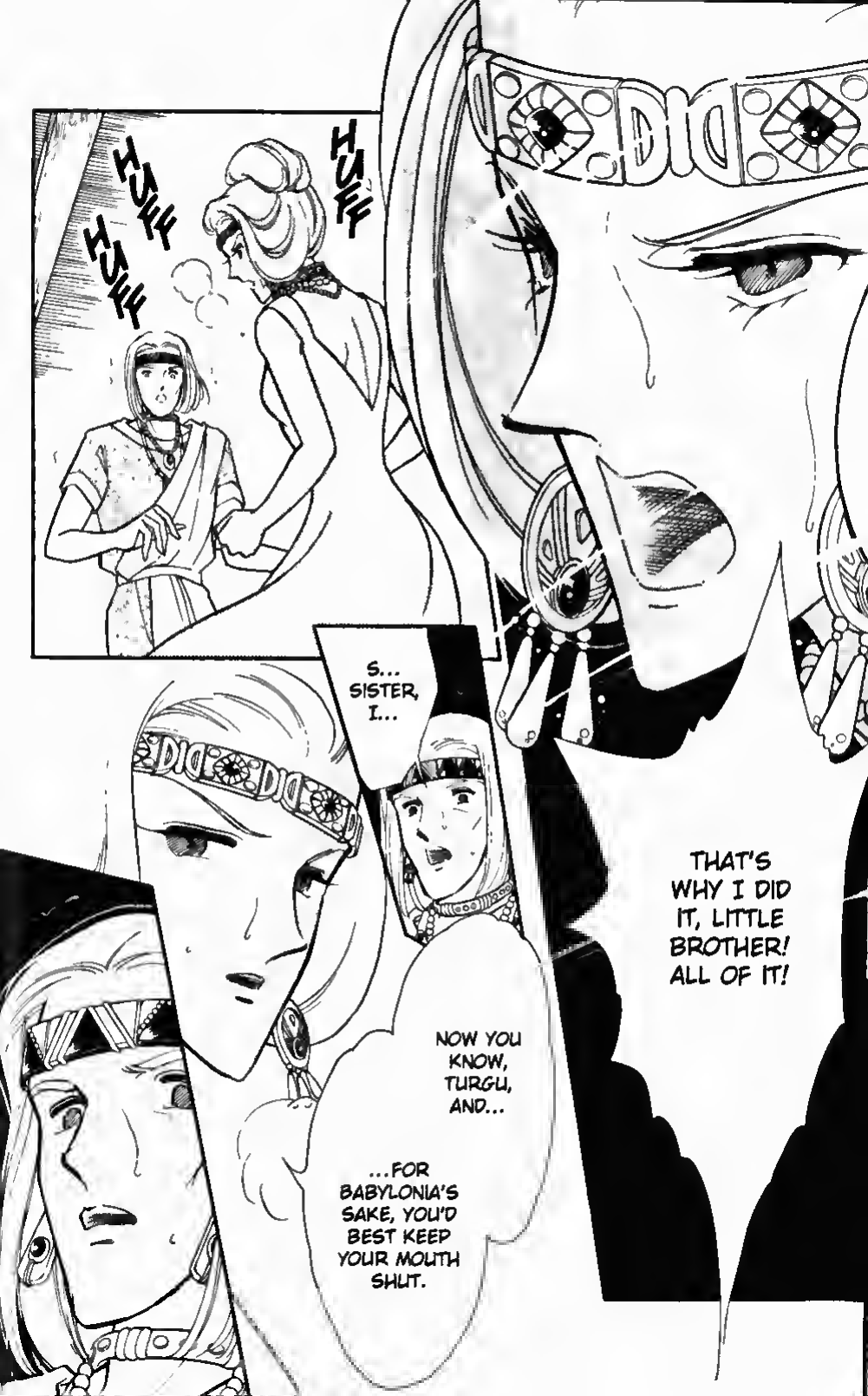
...THE FORMER KING...
...ALSO DIED BY MY HAND.
WHAT?! NO!
...IT WOULD MEAN THE END OF BABY-LONIA—
THIS... THIS IS MADNESS!!
IF THE HITTITES FIND OUT WHAT YOU HAVE DONE...
SLAP

WHAT DO I CARE FOR BABYLONIA?!
S... SISTER...?
KNAST
BABYLONIA SOLD ME TO THE HITTITES, THEREBY MANAGING TO REVERSE ITS DECLINE!
WHAT DID BABYLONIA DO FOR ME IN RETURN?
NOTHING!

I WAS A STRANGER HERE...
...FORCED TO MARRY THE HITTITE KING!
I WAS INTOLERABLY LONELY!
BUT BABYLONIA WAS TOO BUSY REBUILDING TO CARE! I'D ALREADY SERVED MY PURPOSE!

MY HUSBAND, SUPPILULIUMA I, ALREADY HAD MANY WIVES. I WAS JUST ANOTHER ADDITION TO THE SERAGLIO.


I HAD NO ONE TO RELY UPON.
I HAD TO DEPEND ON MYSELF TO SURVIVE.
MY LONE HOPE WAS TO SECURE A HIGHER POSITION FOR MYSELF.
AS FOR ME, I WAS CONDEMNED TO BE JUST ANOTHER CONCUBINE IN THAT CLOSE-KNIT ROYAL FAMILY.
THE CROWN PRINCE HAD ALREADY BEEN SELECTED...
HIS FIRST WIFE WAS QUEEN HINTI. SHE WAS FROM A NOBLE FAMILY, QUITE BEAUTIFUL, AND HAD THE LOVE AND RESPECT OF THE PEOPLE OF THE EMPIRE.
...AND THE KING HAD MANY OTHER SONS INCLUDING KAIL AND ZANNANZA. THEY ALL HAD BRIGHT FUTURES.


HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
THAT'S WHY I DID IT, LITTLE BROTHER! ALL OF IT!
S... SISTER, I...
NOW YOU KNOW, TURGU, AND...
...FOR BABYLONIA'S SAKE, YOU'D BEST KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT.

CREAK
EX... EXCUSE ME, SISTER...
CHNK
I WAS ONLY 15 YEARS OLD...

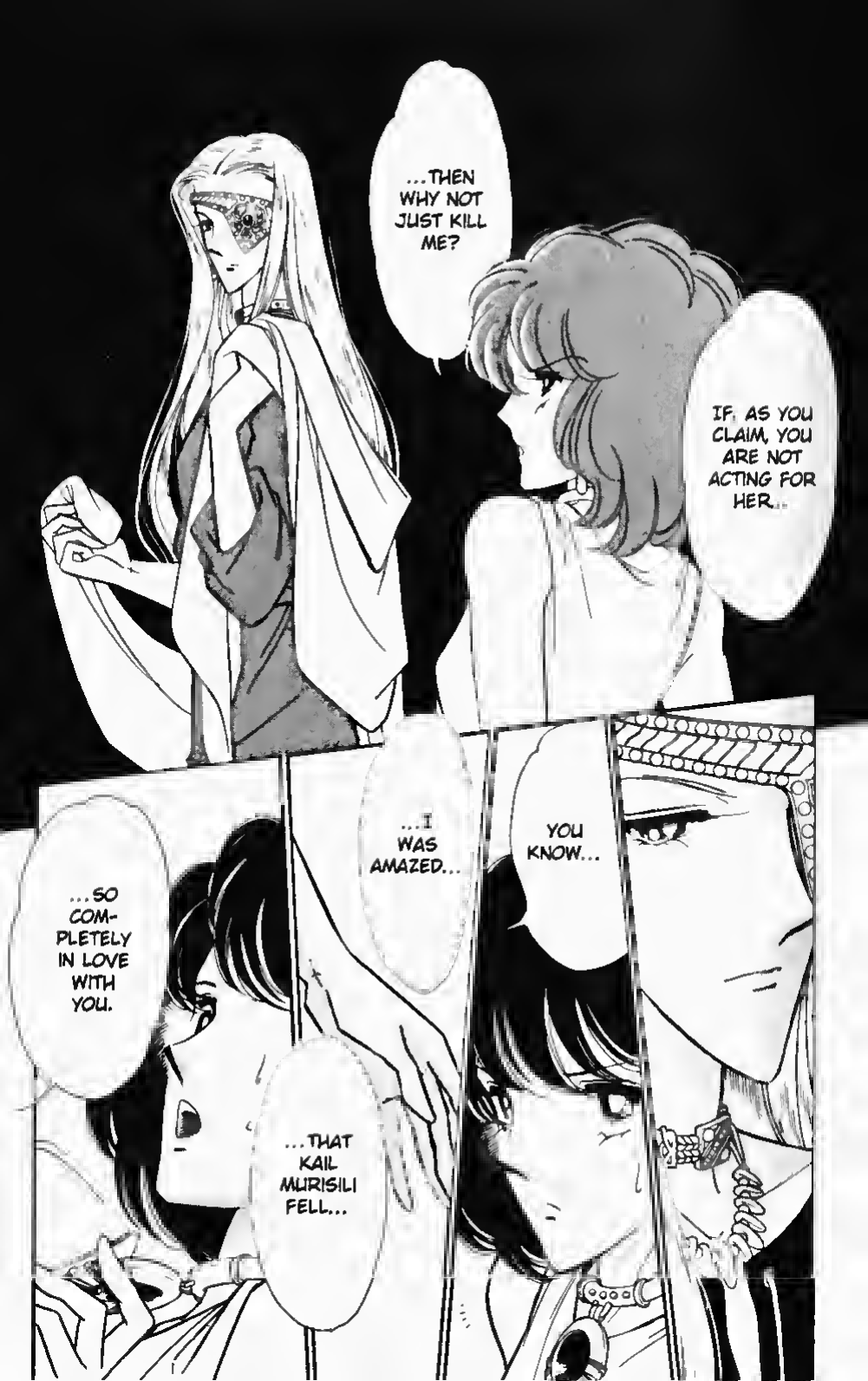
I WAS SO ALONE AND HOMESICK...
...WHEN I WAS SENT HERE.
RUSTLE
!!
RUSTLE
SPLASH

I'VE COME THIS FAR, I CAN'T...
...ABANDON MY DREAMS NOW!

YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW WHY I HAVE...
...THESE SCARS ON MY BACK, YURI?

...
NO, I DON'T.
I'M SURE THE STORY'S UN-PLEASANT.
...WHAT YOU AND QUEEN DOWAGER NAKIA HAVE DONE!
NO MATTER WHAT YOU'VE SUFFERED, I CAN'T FORGIVE...
BUT I DON'T WANT TO FEEL SORRY FOR YOU.

WELL SAID, PRINCESS YURI.
I'M NOT TRYING TO JUSTIFY MY ACTIONS TO YOU.
WE ARE DEALING WITH HOW THINGS STAND NOW.
NO ROOM TO DISCUSS THE QUEEN DOWAGER'S PLANS, THOUGH?
HMM..
...I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN.
WELL...
...THEN LET'S DISCUSS...
...WHAT YOU INTEND TO DO WITH ME NOW.
HIS EXCELLENCY SAYS HE WILL KILL THE QUEEN DOWAGER IF I'M NOT RELEASED.

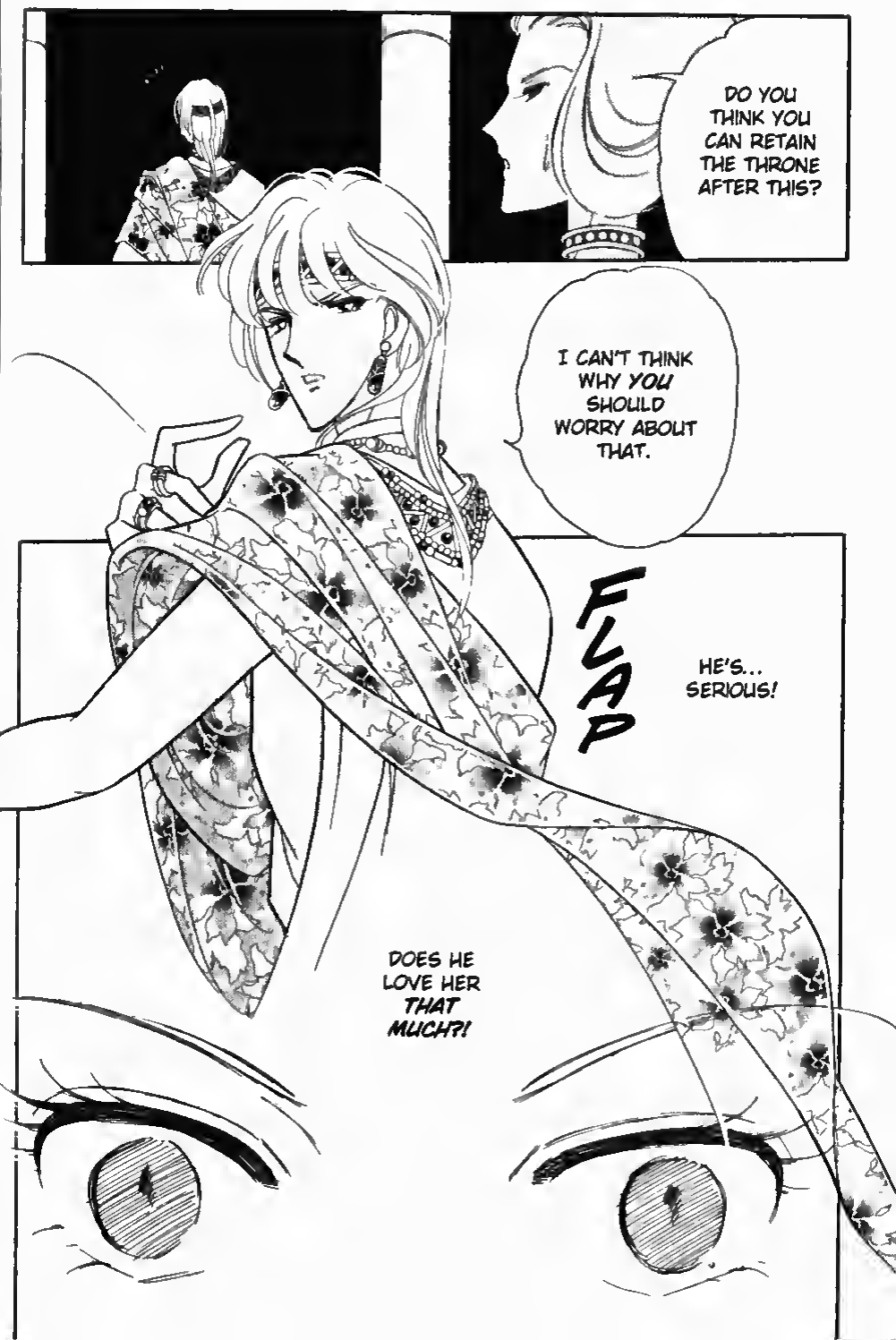

...THEN WHY NOT JUST KILL ME?
IF, AS YOU CLAIM, YOU ARE NOT ACTING FOR HER...
YOU KNOW...
...I WAS AMAZED...
...SO COM-PLETELY IN LOVE WITH YOU.
...THAT KAIL MURISILI FELL...

SNAP
RUSAFA ...
...MAKE SURE SHE DOESN'T ESCAPE
URHI! WAIT!
RUSAFA! PLEASE UNTIE ME!
YOU'VE BOUND ME SO TIGHTLY!

RUSAFA! LISTEN TO ME!
I DON'T CARE ABOUT URHI OR NAKIA'S PAST. I ONLY CARE ABOUT THE PRESENT!
I'M WORRIED ABOUT KAIL, BECAUSE OF WHAT'S HAPPENED ON HIS WATCH.
HE COULD LOSE THE CONFIDENCE OF HIS PEOPLE. COMPARED TO THAT, I DON'T MATTER.

THERE'S TO BE A CEREMONY AT THE MAIN TEMPLE.
AND IT'S OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.
SHALL WE GO?
HIS MAJESTY WILL BE PRAYING FOR ISHTAR'S SWIFT RETURN AND THE EMPIRE'S PROSPERITY.
ROAR
ROAR!!

YOUR MAJESTY!
...PLEASE PROCEED TO THE MAIN TEMPLE.
MOTHER..
IT IS ABSOLUTELY OUTRAGEOUS FOR YOU TO TREAT YOUR TAWANANNA LIKE THIS!
ARE YOU READY TO ACCEPT THE CONSE-QUENCES IF YURI DOES NOT RETURN?
BUT NOT, AS YOU KNOW, UNPREC-EDENTED.


DO YOU THINK YOU CAN RETAIN THE THRONE AFTER THIS?
I CAN'T THINK WHY *YOU* SHOULD WORRY ABOUT THAT.
FLAP
HE'S... SERIOUS!
DOES HE LOVE HER *THAT MUCH?!*

TESHUP, GUARDIAN OF THE HITTITE EMPIRE...
...MAY YOU, BY YOUR GRACE, RETURN OUR ISHTAR TO US!
URHI, RETURN YURI TO ME!
IF YOU DON'T, I *WILL* KILL NAKIA!

"ISHTAR
"ISHTAR
"ROAR
FLAP
HIS MAJESTY MEANS IT.
WHAT A NUISANCE...

HAVE YOU SEEN RUSAFA LATELY?
I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO FIND HIM.
HE WAS LOOKING FOR PRINCESS YURI.
WE SAW HIM IN THE FOREST A WHILE AGO.
THAT'S STRANGE.
WE WERE ALL ORDERED TO WATCH THE QUEEN DOWAGER.
HE WAS NEAR THE BARN...
...AND HE TOLD US HE HADN'T FOUND PRINCESS YURI.
?!

I'VE BEEN WONDERING HOW PRINCESS SELTO COULD KILL THOSE PRINCESSES WITHOUT BEING CAUGHT.
SAME HERE. SHE COULDN'T HAVE COMMITTED THOSE MURDERS WITHOUT HELP FROM SOMEONE ON THE INSIDE.
ARE YOU SAYING RUSAFA COULD HAVE BEEN UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE BLACK WATER, TOO?
ZIPP
AH!
THUK
IT'S AN ARROW!
BUT WHO SHOT IT?
GRAB
IT CAME FROM THAT DIRECTION.
LOOK AT THIS!

IT'S PRINCESS YURI'S!
TIED TO THE ARROW WITH A DRY STRAW...
A PIECE OF HAY...
...FROM THE BARN IN THE FOREST!

PRINCESS YURI.
I'M GOING TO RELEASE YOU.
HIS MAJESTY!
IS HE ALL RIGHT? YOU WENT AWAY AND—
WHAT?
WAIT! UNTIE ME BEFORE YOU GO!
I DID NOTHING TO HIM, I ASSURE YOU.
YOUR AIDES WILL BE HERE SHORTLY.

YOUR AIDES WON'T BE HERE RIGHT AWAY.
MEANWHILE, WHY NOT ENTERTAIN YOUR LOYAL COMMANDER?
?!
I TOLD YOU RUSAFA'S ...
...BEEN IN LOVE WITH YOU FOR QUITE SOME TIME.
WOULD YOU LEAVE HIM UNREWARDED, HIS PASSIONS UNREQUITED?

RUSAFA...
...THIS IS YOUR FIRST AND LAST CHANCE...
...TO FULFILL YOUR SECRET DREAMS. DON'T WASTE IT.
WAIT A MINUTE...
URHI!
GRK

BIG TROUBLE!
IF RUSAFA DRANK NAKIA'S BLACK WATER...
...PRINCESS YURI'S IN TROUBLE.
TOUCHING ISHTAR WOULD BE A CRIME WORSE THAN MURDER!
HE MUSTN'T!
DO YOU THINK RUSAFA'S ...
...DOING SOME-THING... UNFORGIV-ABLE?
NAKIA TOOK ADVANTAGE OF RUSAFA'S LOVE FOR PRINCESS YURI.
RUSAFA...
...YOU MUST RESIST... PLEASE...

FULFILL MY DREAMS ?
I'M SO IN LOVE...
...WITH MY GOD-DESS.
RUSAFA...

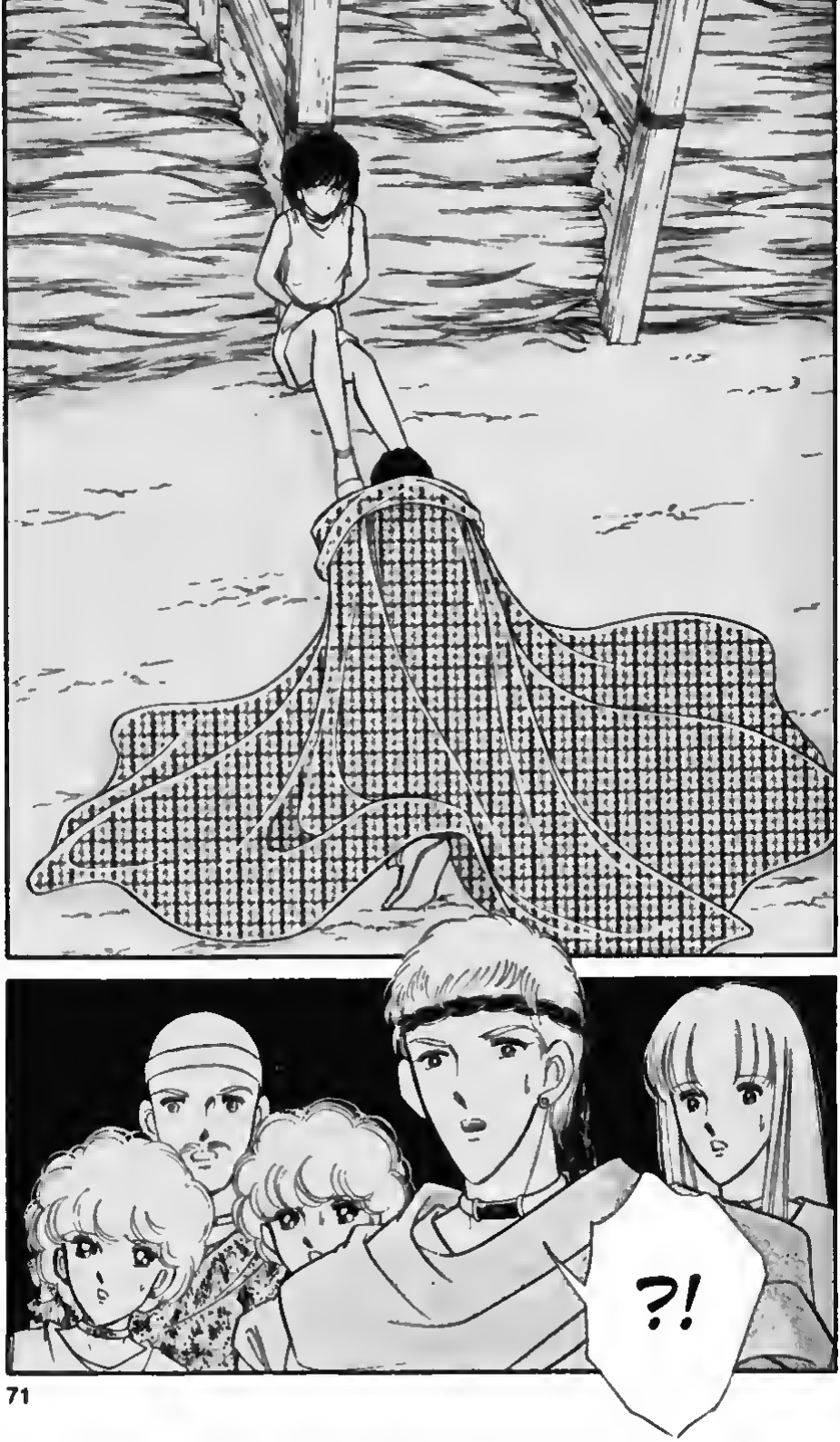
RUSAFA!
COME TO YOUR SENSES, PLEASE!

RUSAFA WANTED TO KEEP HIS LOVE FOR PRINCESS YURI TO HIMSELF.
ORDINARILY, HE WOULD NEVER CONSIDER LAYING A HAND ON HER.
BUT IF HE'S TOTALLY UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE BLACK WATER, HE MAY KNOW NO RESTRAINT...

DON'T, RUSAFA!
HE'LL BE PUNISHED SEVERELY IF HE TOUCHES HIS MAJESTY'S CONCUBINE!
HIS MAJESTY WOULD UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENED, BUT EVEN HE COULDN'T...

...OVERLOOK SUCH A VIOLATION!
THAT'S THE BARN!
BANG!
RUSAFA!

PRINCESS YURI?!
PLIP
PLIP
PLIP



WHAT'S GOING ON?
RUSAFA'S BEEN DOING THIS...
...SINCE URHI LEFT US...

URHI TOLD RUSAFA ...
...THIS WAS HIS CHANCE TO REALIZE HIS DREAMS.
SLUMP
RUSAFA ...?

...THAT I'M AFRAID TO TOUCH HER.
I'M SO IN LOVE WITH HER..
SHE IS MY SACRED GODDESS.

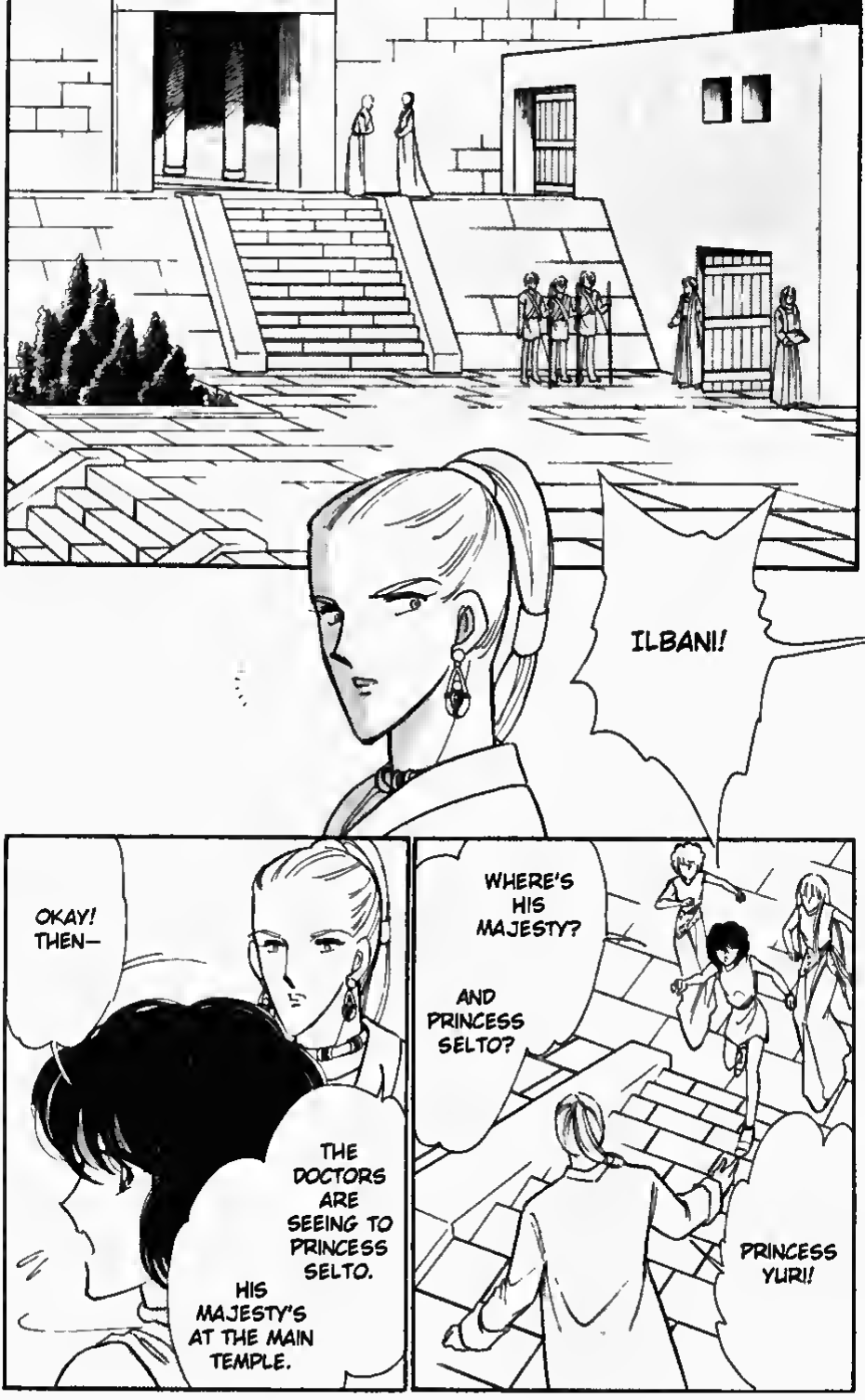
EVERY-THING WILL BE ALL RIGHT.
NOTHING, PRINCESS YURI.
WHAT... WHAT...
...SHOULD I DO, KASH?
WE'LL UNTIE YOU.
COME ON, RUSAFA, GET UP.
AAAH!
GASP

POM
GRAB
FORGIVE ME, RUSAFA.
UNH!
KOFF
KOFF
HAUGH!
KOFF

RUSAFA!
I... I'M..
GO TO HIS MAJESTY, PRINCESS YURI.
WE'LL TAKE CARE OF HIM.
PLEASE FORGET ALL THIS.
NOW THAT HE'S COUGHED UP THE BLACK WATER, HE'LL NEVER BOTHER YOU AGAIN.

YOU SHOULD FOCUS ON THE MATTERS AT HAND.
PLEASE GO TO HIS MAJESTY. ISHTAR MUST RETURN.

ALL RIGHT! BACK TO THE PALACE!
HURRY, PRINCESS YURI.
KASH IS RIGHT.
...HIS MAJESTY.
JUST THINK ABOUT...
...OR KAIL'S MARRIAGE!
THAT'S RIGHT. NOTHING'S BEEN RESOLVED ABOUT PRINCESS SELTO...


ILBANI!
PRINCESS YURI!
WHERE'S HIS MAJESTY?
AND PRINCESS SELTO?
OKAY! THEN—
THE DOCTORS ARE SEEING TO PRINCESS SELTO.
HIS MAJESTY'S AT THE MAIN TEMPLE.

WHAT'S THAT NOISE?
THE TOWNSPEOPLE. WHEN THEY LEARNED THAT YOU...
...WERE MISSING, THEY GATHERED AT THE PLAZA IN FRONT OF THE MAIN TEMPLE.
ROAR
ROAR
ROAR
THEY KNOW FOUR PRINCESSES HAVE BEEN MURDERED AT THE PALACE.
YET THEY SEEM TO BE MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR ISHTAR.

ROAR
LET'S GO TO THE TEMPLE!
ROAR
...ILBANI?
WHAT IS IT...
PLEASE WAIT.
HUH?
PRINCESS YURI...
...ARE YOU A GOOD SWIMMER?

RAAH ROAR
...HELP HIS MAJESTY OUT.
I HAVE AN IDEA THAT MIGHT...
RAAH ROAR
WHY DO YOU ASK?
SMILE
THE TEMPLE SPRING AND ITS SOURCE BEHIND THE TEMPLE ...
...ARE CONNECTED BY AN ANCIENT DUCT.
HUH?
WHAT'S HE THINKING?
RAAH ROAR

ISHTAR
ROAR
ISHTAR
ISHTAR
ROAR
ISHTAR
ROAR
WHAT'S GOING ON? IS ISHTAR STILL MISSING?
I'M AFRAID SO.
IT'S HIS MAJESTY'S FAULT.
ISHTAR WAS SENT TO US BY THE GODS.
YET HIS MAJESTY HASN'T SEEN FIT TO TAKE HER AS HIS WIFE.

YOUR MAJESTY.

ILBANI.
HAS URHI CONTACTED US YET?
NO, BUT MAY I ASK YOU...
...TO PRAY AT THE SPRING BEFORE THE MAIN TEMPLE?
WHY?
GLANCE
THIS IS ALL JUST A CHARADE...
I HAVE NO REAL PRAYERS TO OFFER UP TODAY.
...TO SEND A MESSAGE TO URHI ABOUT YURI.
I REALIZE THAT.
CONTINUE THE PRETENSE, BUT...
...MY HUMBLE ADVICE WOULD BE TO DO IT AT THE SPRING... YOUR MAJESTY.

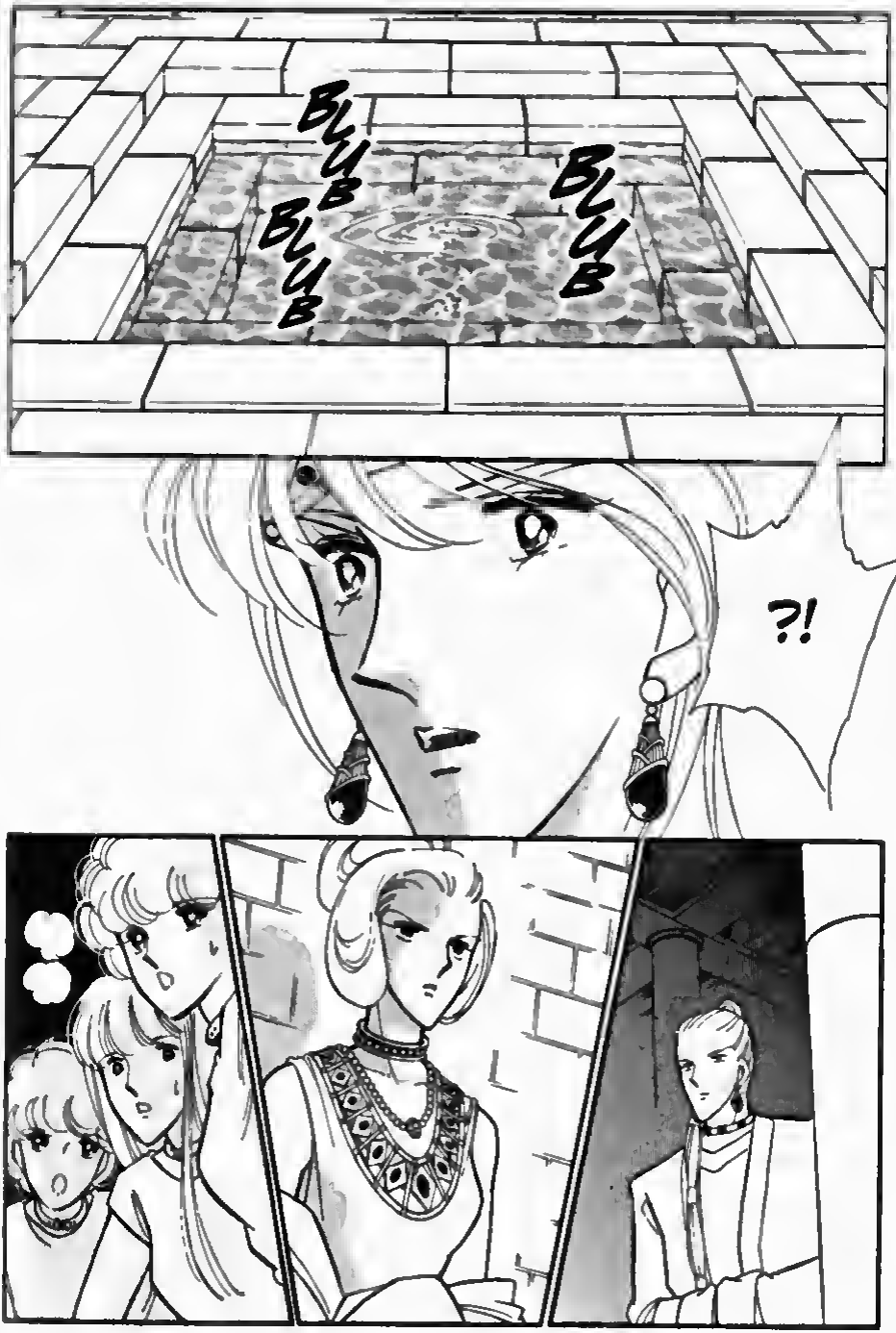
YOU'RE HUMBLE ADVICE, EH?
SMILE
HERE COMES HIS MAJESTY!
HIS MAJESTY HAS APPEARED IN FRONT OF THE TEMPLE!
ROAR
ROAR
ROAR

RAAA

HUSH
HEAR ME TESHUP, SUPREME GOD OF THE HITTITES!
AS THE KING OF THIS EMPIRE, I COME FORWARD AND BESEECH YOU...
...TO RETURN OUR BELOVED ISHTAR TO US!

SILENCE
I THINK ISHTAR'S GONE FOR GOOD.
MUR MUR
MUR MUR
MUR MUR
NOTHING'S HAPPEN-ING.
WE AWAIT YOUR WILL, TESHUP!

TESHUP SENT ISHTAR TO HIS MAJESTY, BUT HIS MAJESTY...
MURMUR
MURMUR
MURMUR
TESHUP MUST BE VERY ANGRY!
MURMUR
SHE'S NOT COMING BACK!
...HASN'T MARRIED HER! TESHUP MUST BE VERY UPSET!
BLUB
?!


BLUB
BLUB
BLUB
BLUB
?!

BLUB
BLUB
SPLOSH

THE
LEGEND
TELLS...

...AND BROUGHT GLORY TO THE HITTITE EMPIRE.
SHE WAS A SMALL WOMAN WITH BLACK HAIR, BLACK EYES, AND SMOOTH, IVORY COLORED SKIN. SHE EMERGED FROM THE SPRING...
...THAT A GODDESS DESCENDED FROM THE SKY FOR THE BENEFIT OF KING MURSILI II.

YURI!

KAIL...
...I'M SORRY FOR THE WORRY I CAUSED YOU.
YOU HAVE MORE IMPORTANT MATTERS THAN MY SAFETY TO CONCERN YOU.
THERE'S YOUR MARRIAGE, FOR INSTANCE...
I HAVE ALREADY MADE UP MY MIND ABOUT IT.
YOU HAVE?

I SHOULD HAVE ANNOUNCED IT BEFORE NAKIA WAS ABLE TO LAUNCH YET ANOTHER PLOT AGAINST YOU.
I HESITATED, WITH GHASTLY CONSE-QUENCES. I'M SO SORRY...
YOU'VE... MADE UP YOUR MIND ABOUT YOUR MARRIAGE?
PRINCESS ADDA CHARLATO? PRINCESS ALEXANDRA?
THEY'RE THE ONLY ONES LEFT!
MY GOD, WHOM HAS HE CHOSEN?
YOUR EXCELLENCY.

QUEEN DOWAGER...
NOW THAT YOUR CONCUBINE HAS RETURNED...
...MAY I RETURN TO MY PALACE?
YES, YOU MAY.
THIS CEREMONY IS CONCLUDED.

TA...
TAWA-
NANNA.
LONG
LIVE
TAWANANNA...
...YURI
ISHTARI

WHAT... DO THEY MEAN?
TAWANANNA ISHTAR!
LONG LIVE TAWANANNA ISHTAR!
TAWANANNA!
TAWANANNA!
LONG LIVE ISHTAR!
TA... TAWANANNA ISHTAR!
TAWANANNA ISHTAR!
TAWANANNA ISHTAR!
ROAAHH
ROAAHH
ROAAHH
ROAAHH

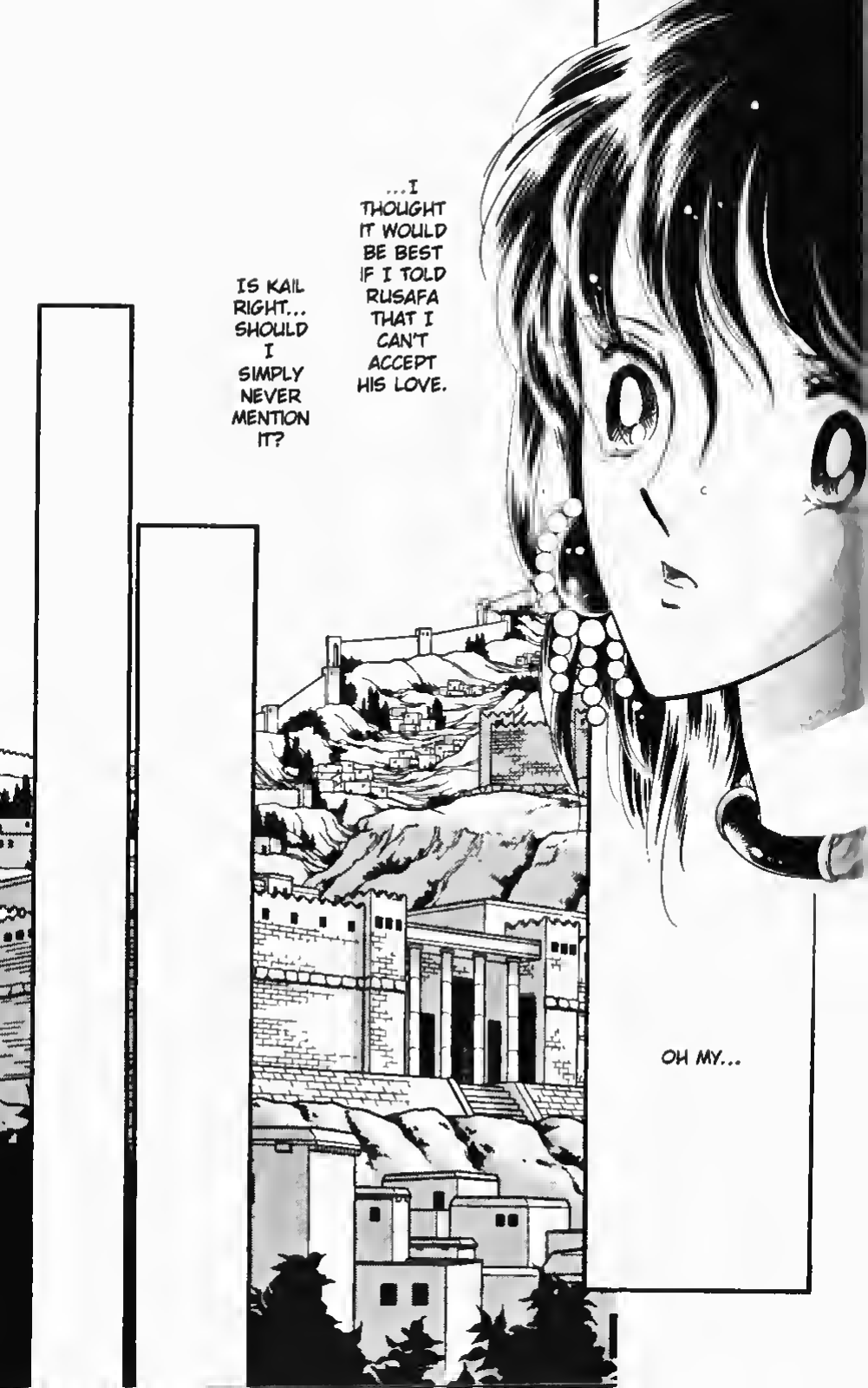
QUEEN DOWAGER NAKIA IS OUR TAWANANNA!
PLEASE, PEOPLE!
TAWANANNA ISHTAR!
I SAID, BE QUIET!
ISHTAR!
BE QUIET!
ISHTAR!
I'LL NEVER BE TAWA-NANNA.
ROAR
RAAA
I...I'M GLAD THE PEOPLE LIKE ME...
...BUT WHY DO THEY SHOUT OUT LIKE THIS?
...

YURI ISHTAR!
PLEASE BE OUR TAWANANNA!
ROOOAAR
RAAAAHH
ROOAR

YOUR MAJESTY...
PRINCESS YURI...
RUSAFA! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YES, AND...
...I'M PROFOUNDLY SORRY...
...FOR WHAT I HAVE DONE.
I AWAIT YOUR JUDGMENT.

INDEED.
RUSAFA, I KNOW YOU WERE UNDER SOMEONE ELSE'S CONTROL WHEN YOU KIDNAPPED YURI.
I KNOW, SIR.
PLEASE DO AS YOU SEE FIT.
HOWEVER, THE PUBLIC WILL SOON FIND OUT YOU WERE THE CULPRIT AND DEMAND YOUR PUNISHMENT.
RUSAFA'S FEELINGS FOR ME MADE HIM VULNERABLE TO NAKIA'S MACHINATIONS.
YET, EVEN THEN, HIS SENSE OF HONOR HELD FAST...

RUSAFA ...
I'M..I'M SORRY...
FLINCH
I WILL PASS SENTENCE IN DUE TIME.
UNTIL THEN, YOU WILL REMAIN IN THE CUSTODY OF KASH AND MITTANNAMWA.
HUH?!
I'M SURE RUSAFA WANTED TO KEEP HIS LOVE FOR YOU PRIVATE...
...SO PRETEND THAT YOU NEVER CAME TO KNOW OF IT.
WHAT? BUT...
DON'T APOLO-GIZE, YURI.


...I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE BEST IF I TOLD RUSAFA THAT I CAN'T ACCEPT HIS LOVE.
IS KAIL RIGHT... SHOULD I SIMPLY NEVER MENTION IT?
OH MY...

POOR RUSAFA, HE'S A GOOD MAN...

BUT IT'S DIFFICULT TO PRETEND I NEVER NOTICED.

PERHAPS THAT IS BEST.

SQUEAK

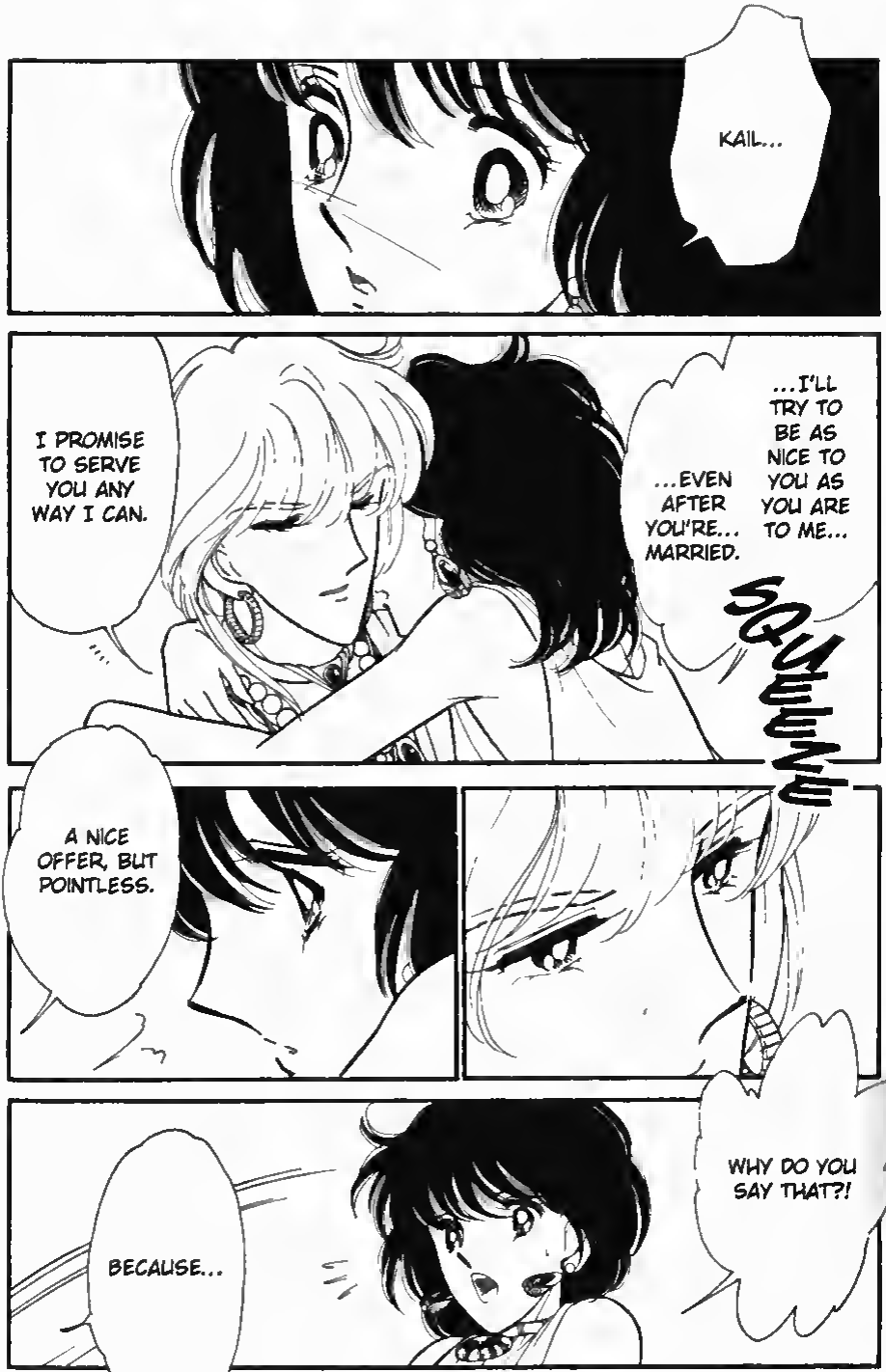
THE PEOPLE HAVE GONE HOME AT LAST.

KAIL...
THEY'RE THRILLED THAT YOU HAVE COME BACK TO US.
BUT YOU KNOW WHO IS THE MOST OVER-JOYED...
...ABOUT THAT, DON'T YOU?
I COULD NEVER ACCEPT RUSAFA'S LOVE...
...BECAUSE I HAVE KAIL.

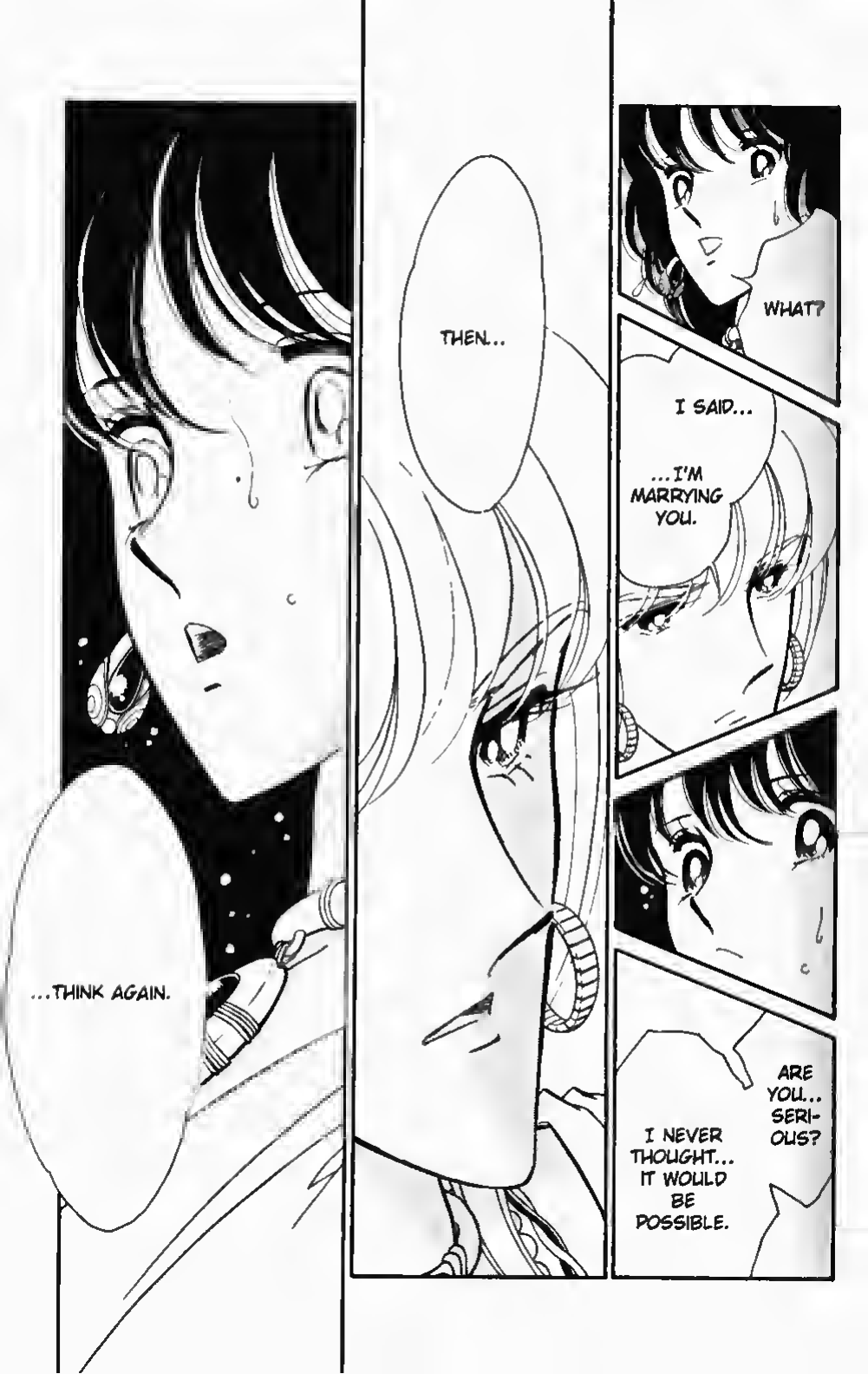
KAIL IS THE ONLY MAN I LOVE, BUT...
FLINCH
PLEASE, NOT TONIGHT!
N...NO...
...LET'S NOT... DO THIS TONIGHT, KAIL.

IS THAT WHAT'S WEIGHING ON YOUR MIND TONIGHT?
IS IT BECAUSE OF RUSAFA?
NO, PLEASE!
...

!!
M... MY NECKLACE!
WHIP
SULKY
..BROAD-MINDED ENOUGH TO RETURN ANOTHER MAN'S...
...GIFT TO HIS WOMAN.
OR SOFT-HEADED
I MUST BE THE ONLY MAN ON EARTH...


KAIL...
...I'LL TRY TO BE AS NICE TO YOU AS YOU ARE TO ME...
...EVEN AFTER YOU'RE... MARRIED.
I PROMISE TO SERVE YOU ANY WAY I CAN.
SQUEEZE
A NICE OFFER, BUT POINTLESS.
WHY DO YOU SAY THAT?!
BECAUSE...

...THE WOMAN I'M MARRYING...
...IS YOU, YURI. I'VE MADE UP MY MIND.


ARE YOU... SERIOUS?
I NEVER THOUGHT... IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE.
WHAT?
I SAID...
...I'M MARRYING YOU.
THEN...
...THINK AGAIN.

YOU KNOW THAT I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR THE RIGHT WOMAN TO BE MY WIFE.
SHE MUST HAVE BOTH GREAT LEADERSHIP QUALITIES AND CONSIDERABLE SELF-RESTRAINT.
I'LL EXPECT A LOT OF HER, NOT JUST AS A WOMAN BUT ALSO AS QUEEN OF THE HITTITE EMPIRE...
AND THAT WOMAN, YURI, IS YOU!
...AN EMPIRE WHICH CONTROLS HALF THE ORIENT. SHE MUST HAVE NOT ONLY MY RESPECT, BUT THAT OF THE PEOPLE...
...A PEOPLE, AS YOU SAW TODAY, WHO KNOW THEIR OWN MINDS!

I HAVE NO INTENTION OF MARRYING ANYONE ELSE! DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
ONLY SUCH A WOMAN COULD HAVE MY LOVE!

KAIL WANTS ME TO BE HIS WIFE?
HE WANTS ME TO BE TAWANANNA OF THE HITTITE EMPIRE?

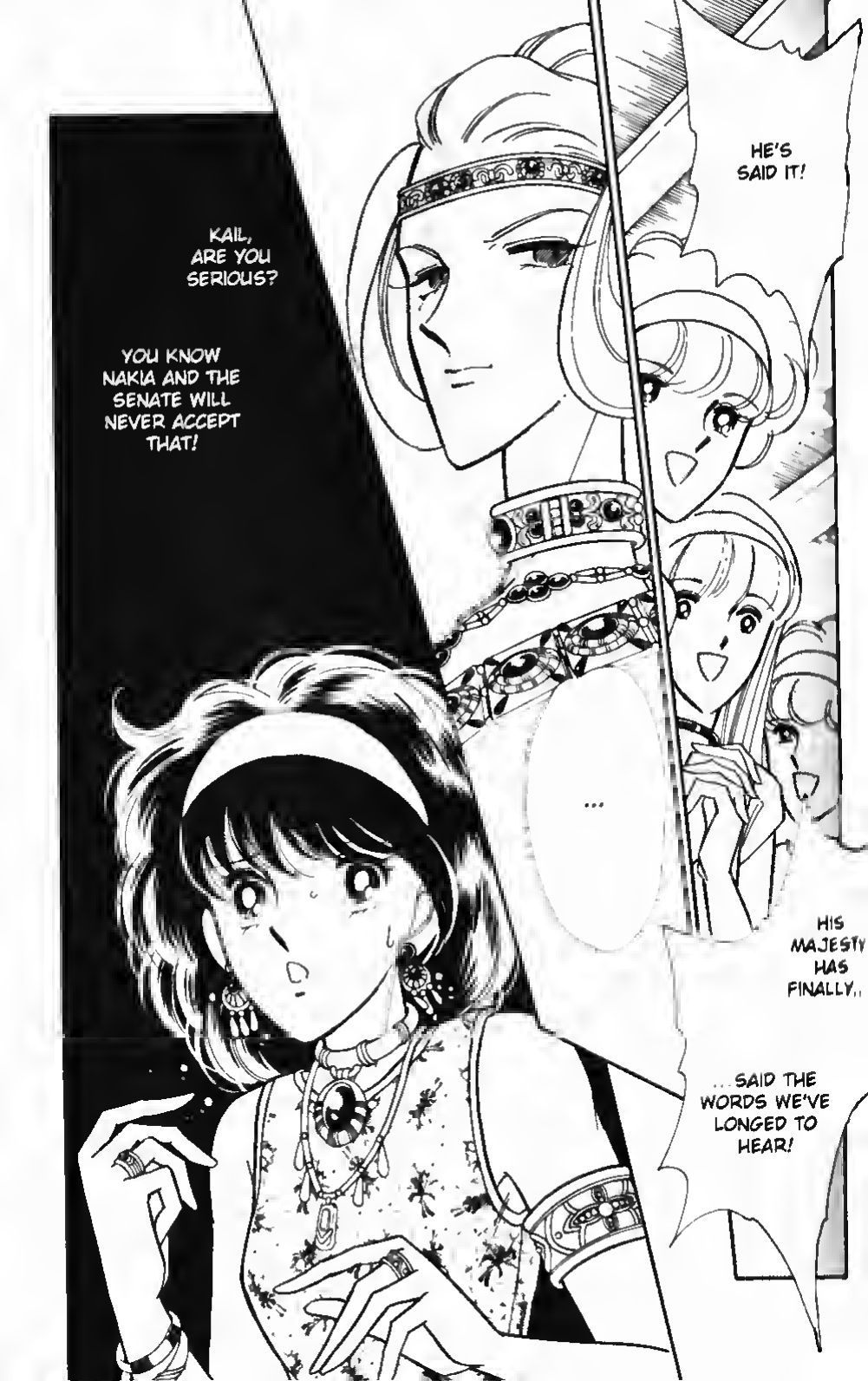
NAKIA'S PALACE
I NEVER IMAGINED ...
...ANY-THING LIKE THIS COULD HAPPEN.
BLUB BLUB
WE MAY HAVE BROUGHT THE WRONG GIRL HERE.
KAIL MURSILI HAS COURTED MANY WOMEN IN THE PAST, BUT HE'S NEVER REALLY...
...FALLEN IN LOVE WITH ANY OF THEM.

HER APPEARANCE HERE IS NO STROKE OF FORTUNE.
I DON'T THINK SO.
AFTER WATCHING KAIL TODAY, I CAME TO REALIZE...
...THAT GIRL MAY WELL BE OF MORE VALUE TO ME ALIVE THAN DEAD.
RATHER, SHE'S A BAD OMEN FOR THIS EMPIRE AND SHE WILL EVENTUALLY DESTROY KAIL.

JUST WAIT AND SEE, URHI.
IF I'M RIGHT, KAIL WILL ANNOUNCE TOMORROW ON THE SENATE FLOOR..
...THAT HE INTENDS TO MARRY THAT GIRL. IMAGINE HOW THAT NEWS WILL BE RECEIVED.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

SENATE SESSION
Y...YOUR MAJESTY...
...PLEASE, WOULD YOU REPEAT WHAT YOU JUST SAID?

I SAID...
...I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE YURI ISHTAR..
...AS MY WIFE.


HE'S SAID IT!
KAIL, ARE YOU SERIOUS?
YOU KNOW NAKIA AND THE SENATE WILL NEVER ACCEPT THAT!
...
HIS MAJESTY HAS FINALLY...
...SAID THE WORDS WE'VE LONGED TO HEAR!

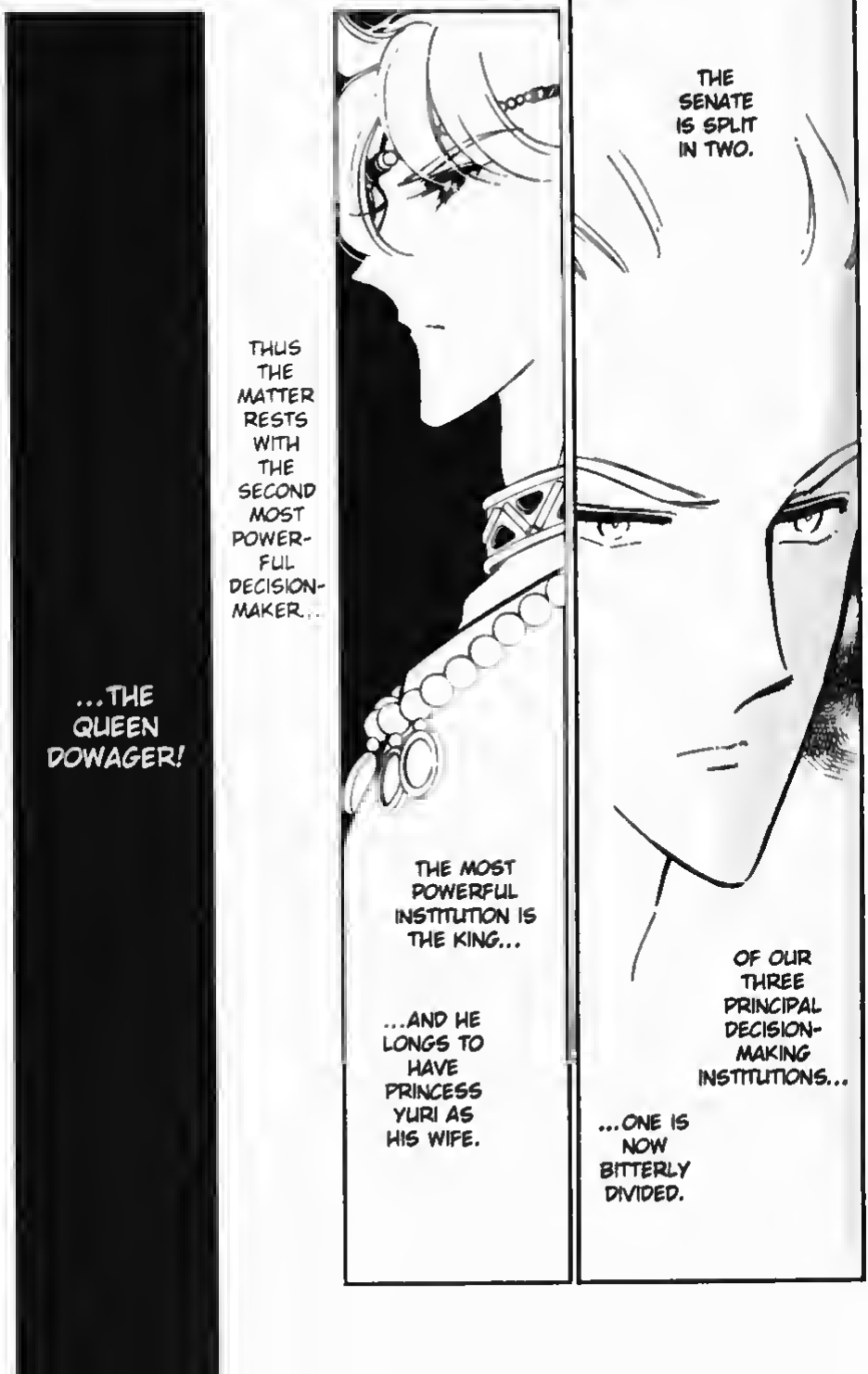
THEREFORE, I WOULD TAKE HER AS MY WIFE. SHE IS MORE THAN FIT TO BE QUEEN...
...OF OUR GREAT NATION.
MURMUR
MURMUR
MURMUR
I BELIEVE NO SENATOR WOULD DISAGREE THAT...
...YURI HAS ALL THE QUALITIES ONE WOULD WISH FOR IN A QUEEN.

SO IT IS BEFORE YOU— MY CHOICE FOR MY BRIDE IS YURI ISHTAR!
KLANK
THE WIFE OF OUR KING MUST BE CHOSEN FROM THE HITTITE ROYAL FAMILY OR FROM THE ROYAL FAMILY OF A FOREIGN COUNTRY! THIS IS OUR CUSTOM!
YOUR MAJESTY!
YOU KNOW THIS IS UNACCEPT-ABLE!

WHY MUST YOUR MAJESTY UPSET THINGS LIKE THIS?!
SENATOR AYGIL IS RIGHT!
KLINK
...MANY COUNTRIES THAT HAVE DECLINED BY EXCESSIVE ADHERENCE TO IT.
I RESPECT TRADITION, BUT I ALSO KNOW....
YOU ALL KNOW THIS IS HARDLY OUT OF KEEPING WITH WHO I AM.
I'D RATHER MARRY THE WOMAN...
...WHO BEST SUITS ME AND MY COUNTRY, THAN TO CHOOSE A WIFE...

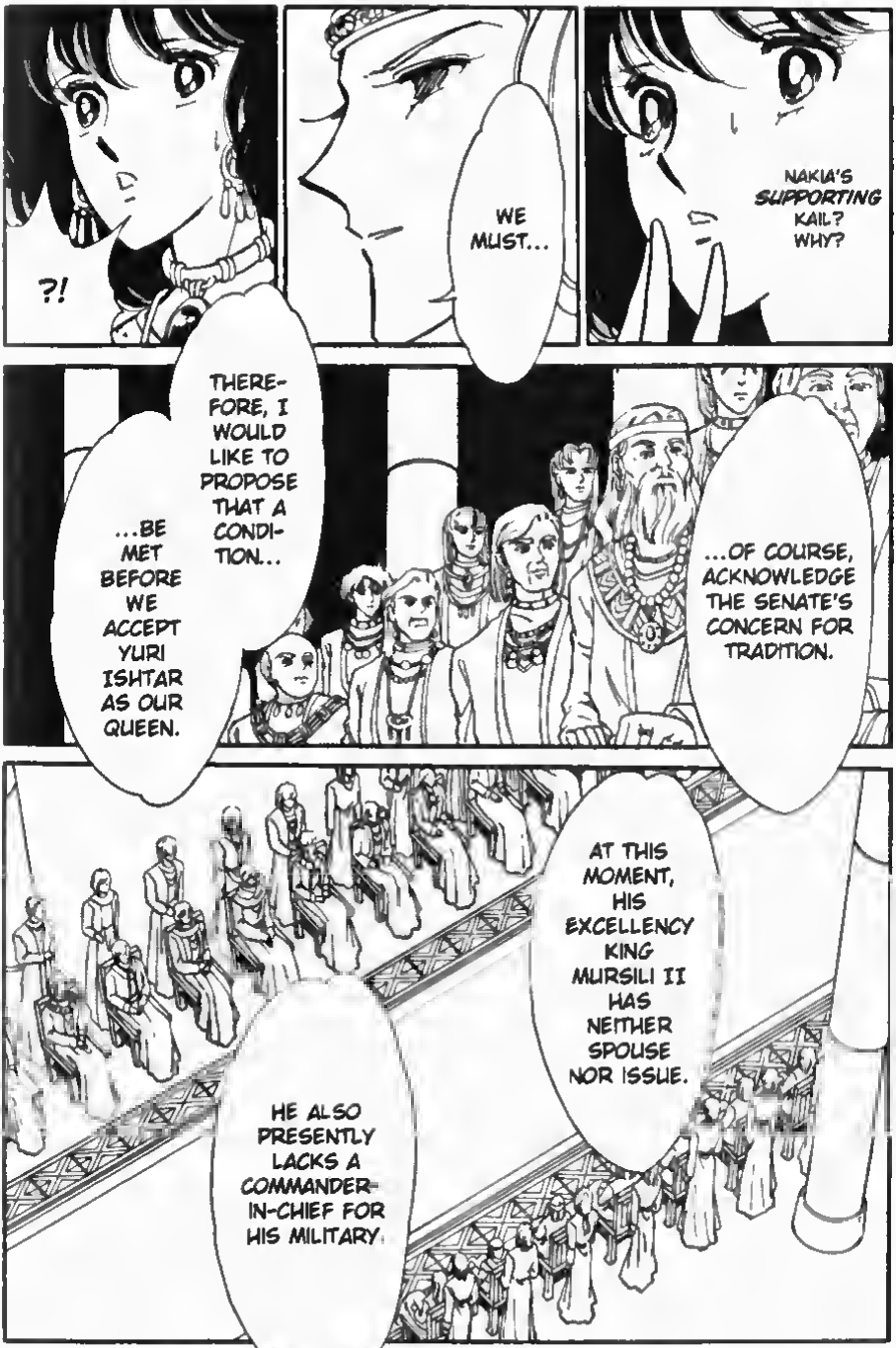
...SOLELY AS CUSTOM DEMANDS.
COME THIS WAY, YURI.
KAIL!

WE DO NEED SOMEONE WITH UNCHALLENGED INTEGRITY...
...AS OUR QUEEN. WE SHOULD NOT PLACE SO MUCH WEIGHT ON TRADITION.
BUZZ
BUZZ
MURMUR
I WOULD SAY...
...YURI ISHTAR WOULD MAKE A SPLENDID QUEEN
KLINK
TRADITIONS EXIST BECAUSE THEY'VE PROVEN THEIR WORTH!
HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT?!
SNARL
ME AS WELL!
AND ME!
HOWL
HONOR THEM TO THE EXCLUSION OF ALL THAT THE FUTURE PORTENDS? I THINK NOT! I AM FOR ACCEPTING ISHTAR AS OUR QUEEN!
GROWL
WE MUST HONOR THEM!


THE SENATE IS SPLIT IN TWO.
OF OUR THREE PRINCIPAL DECISION-MAKING INSTITUTIONS...
...ONE IS NOW BITTERLY DIVIDED.
THE MOST POWERFUL INSTITUTION IS THE KING...
...AND HE LONGS TO HAVE PRINCESS YURI AS HIS WIFE.
THUS THE MATTER RESTS WITH THE SECOND MOST POWER-FUL DECISION-MAKER...
...THE QUEEN DOWAGER!

THERE'S NO WAY NAKIA WILL SUP-PORT IT.
YOU CAN'T MARRY ME, KAIL.
YOUR HIGHNESS, MAY WE ASK YOUR OPINION ON THIS MATTER?

I HAVE NO OBJEC-TION..
...TO HIS MAJESTY'S PROPOSAL.
HUH?!
EVERYONE KNOWS HIS MAJESTY LOVES YURI ISHTAR DEARLY.
...FOR ONE, WOULD RATHER ENSURE HIS HAPPINESS. I BELIEVE THERE'S ROOM FOR COMPRO-MISE.
PREVENT-ING THIS MARRIAGE WOULD SADDEN HIM, AND I...
YOUR HIGHNESS!
OOOOH


?!
WE MUST...
NAKIA'S *SUPPORTING* KAIL? WHY?
...OF COURSE, ACKNOWLEDGE THE SENATE'S CONCERN FOR TRADITION.
THEREFORE, I WOULD LIKE TO PROPOSE THAT A CONDITION...
...BE MET BEFORE WE ACCEPT YURI ISHTAR AS OUR QUEEN.
AT THIS MOMENT, HIS EXCELLENCY KING MURSILI II HAS NEITHER SPOUSE NOR ISSUE.
HE ALSO PRESENTLY LACKS A COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FOR HIS MILITARY.

IF YURI ISHTAR SHOWS SHE CAN SERVE HIS MAJESTY IN THAT LATTER CAPACITY...
...I WILL QUITE HAPPILY ACCEPT HER AS THE NEXT QUEEN OF THE HITTITE EMPIRE.

M...ME AS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF?
NO WOMAN HAS EVER SERVED IN THAT CAPACITY!
YOUR HIGHNESS!
AS YOU KNOW, WAR WITH EGYPT IS IMMINENT.
WHAT BETTER OPPORTUNITY COULD THERE BE FOR THE GODDESS OF WAR TO SERVE OUR NATION?
LEADING OUR MILITARY IS THEREFORE THE MOST SUITABLE POSITION FOR HER TO ASSUME.
OUR PEOPLE PROCLAIM HER ISHTAR, GODDESS OF WAR.

PRINCESS YURI, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF...
THAT'S PERFECT! SHE'S A NATURAL FOR THE JOB!
HOO-HAH!
TRUE ENOUGH!
NO QUESTION PRINCESS YURI WAS BORN TO LEAD.
BUT WHY DOES ...
...THE QUEEN DOWAGER SEEM TO AGREE?
YURI MUST SERVE AS THE MILITARY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF...
...IN ORDER TO BECOME MY WIFE?

I CAN'T DO IT, KAIL!
I CAN'T ASSUME SUCH AN IMPORTANT OFFICE.
THE REASON I CHOSE TO STAY IS BECAUSE I LOVE YOU, THAT'S IT.
I'M NO ONE SPECIAL!

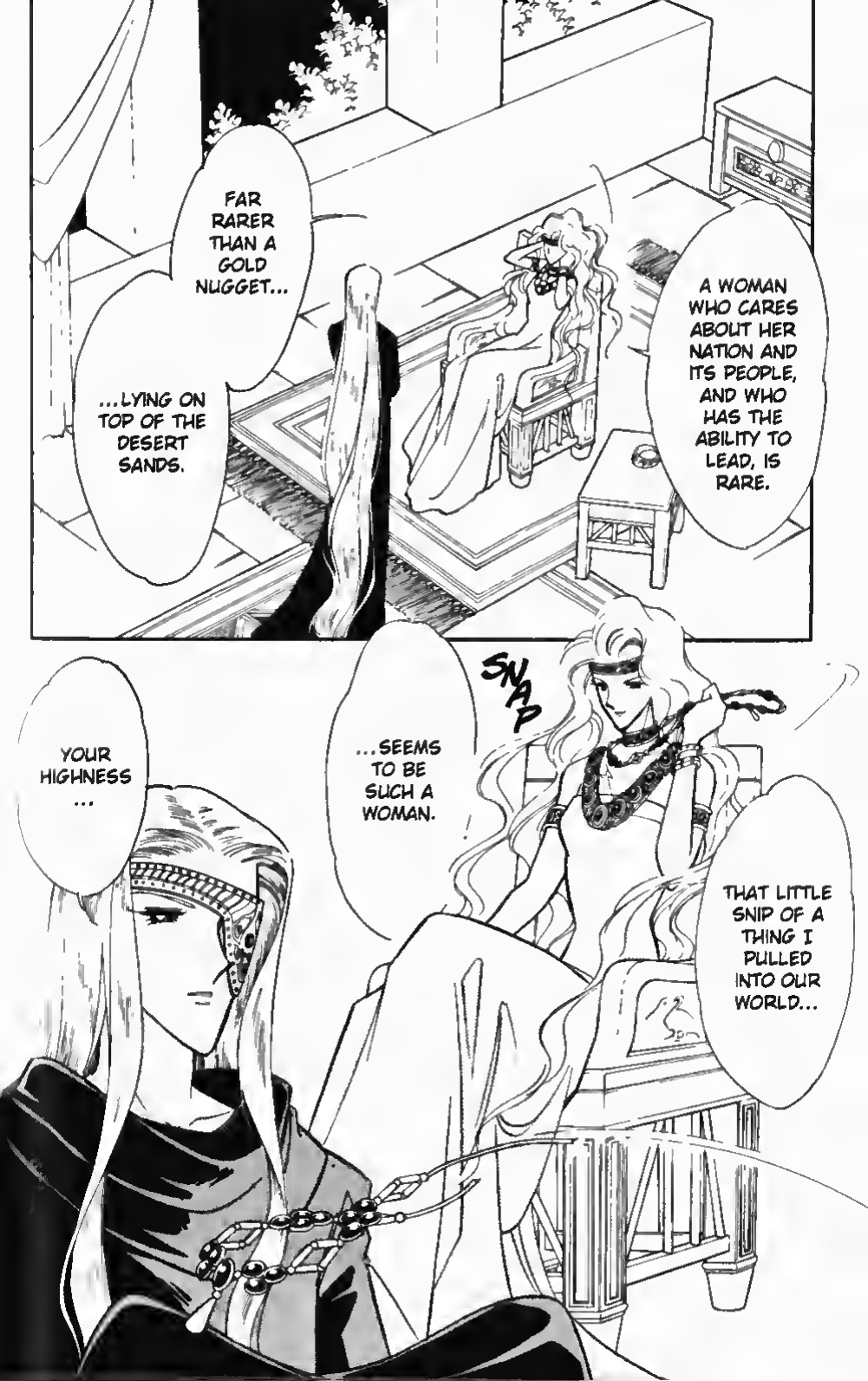
THE ANSWER WILL BE THE SAME!
THIS DECISION IS ENTIRELY YOURS, YURI.
THINK ABOUT IT UNTIL THE SENATE NEXT CONVENES...
I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR A WOMAN...
...WITH WHOM I CAN SHARE MY LIFE AND THIS EMPIRE, AN EMPIRE...
...WHICH CONTROLS HALF THE ORIENT.
I'M THRILLED THAT YOU WANT TO MARRY ME, BUT...
I CAN NEVER BE YOUR QUEEN!

YOU UNDER-ESTIMATE YOURSELF, YURI.
I WILL DO ALL I CAN TO MAKE YOU HAPPY, BUT LEADING THE IMPERIAL FORCES? IMPOSSIBLE!
...THIS IS JUST *TOO MUCH!*

...LEADER...
I'VE NEVER SEEN A MORE NATURAL ...
...THAN YOU. YOU COULD CHANGE THE WORLD.
BUT I DON'T...
...REALLY BELONG TO THIS WORLD.

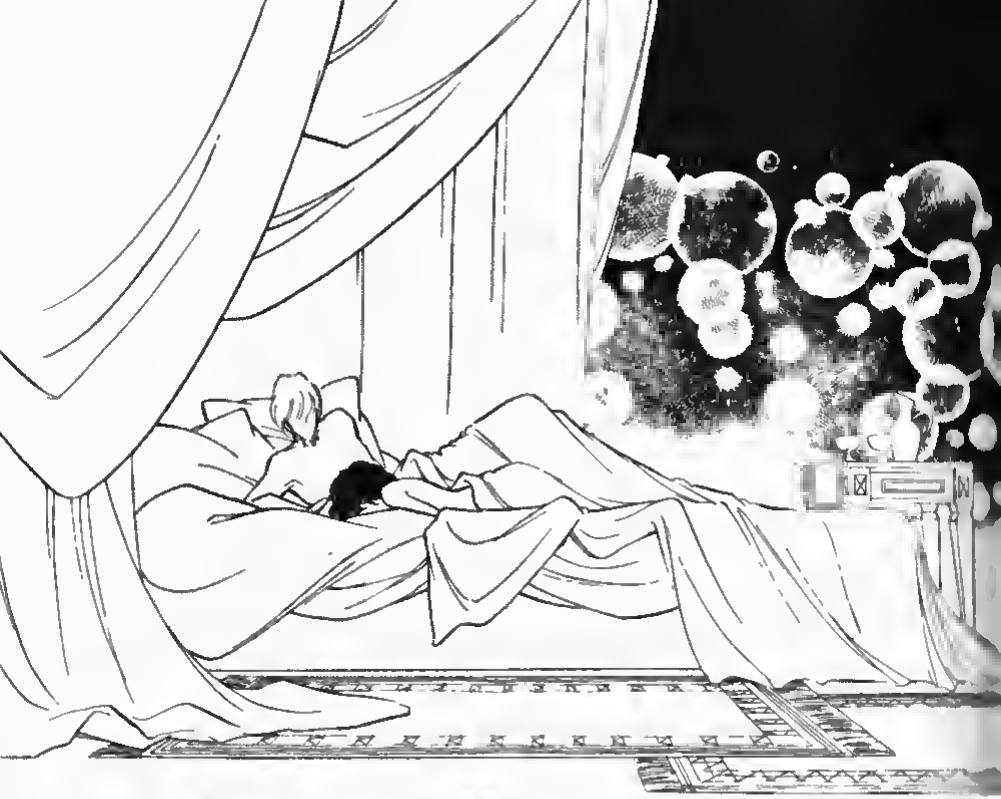
OH...!!
THIS ISN'T MY WORLD... I'M HERE BECAUSE I LOVE KAIL.
AND YET... WILL THAT ALTER THE COURSE OF HISTORY?
UH...
UNGH!

YOU KNOW WHAT, URHI?
BECOMING QUEEN... IT'S TOO GREAT A BURDEN...


FAR RARER THAN A GOLD NUGGET...
...LYING ON TOP OF THE DESERT SANDS.
A WOMAN WHO CARES ABOUT HER NATION AND ITS PEOPLE, AND WHO HAS THE ABILITY TO LEAD, IS RARE.
SNAP
...SEEMS TO BE SUCH A WOMAN.
THAT LITTLE SNIP OF A THING I PULLED INTO OUR WORLD...
YOUR HIGHNESS ...

THAT GIRL...
...COULD PROVE VERY IMPORTANT FOR THIS NATION.
AND KAIL IS SO MUCH IN LOVE WITH HER THAT HE CAN CARE...
...FOR NO ONE ELSE. HE MAY FINALLY BE GETTING AN INKLING...

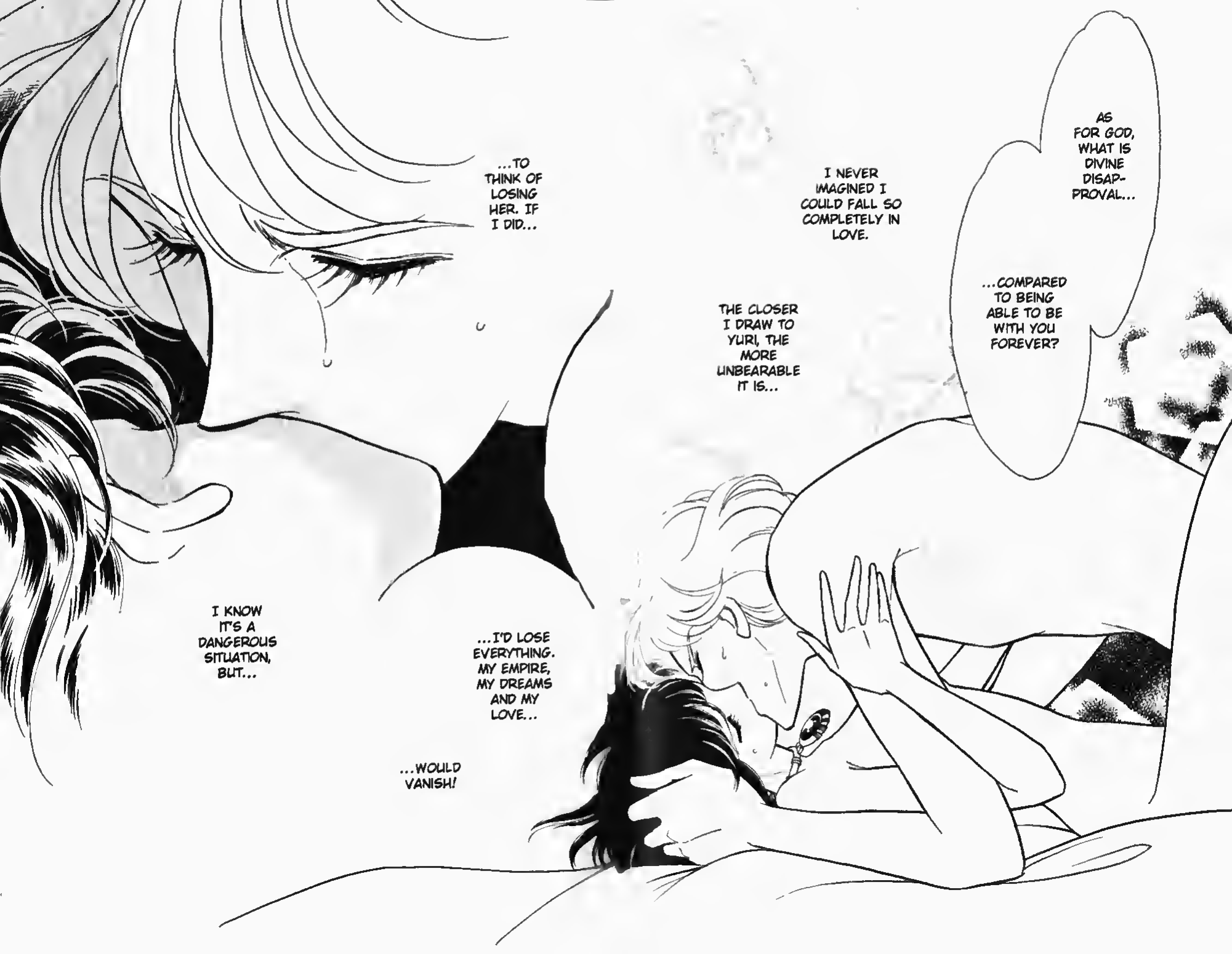
...OF HOW
OVERWHELMING
IT CAN BE TO
BECOME SO
DEEPLY
ATTACHED LIKE
THAT.



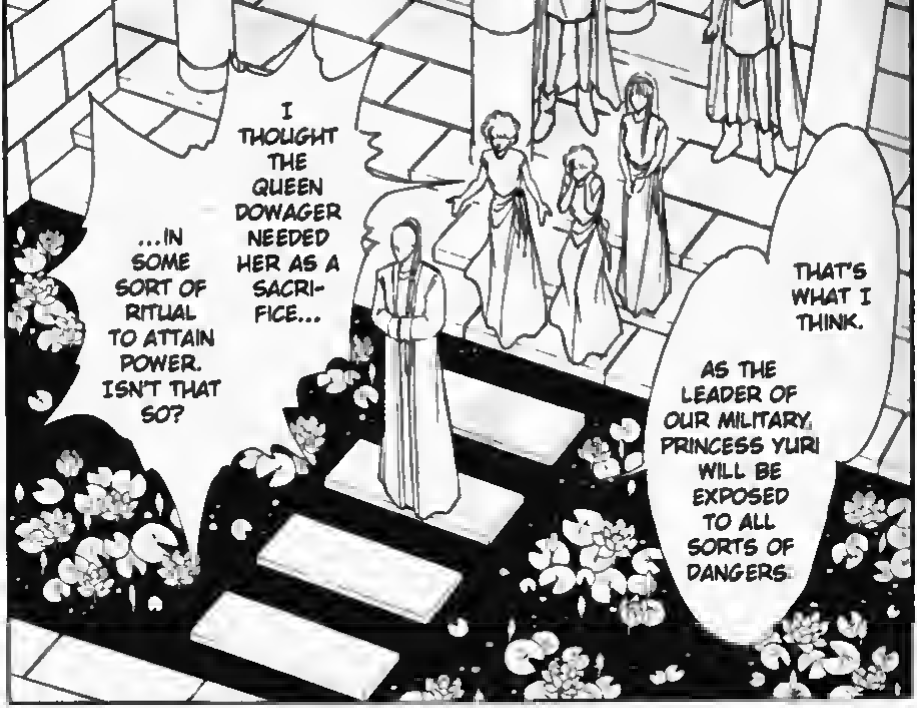
KAIL...
...I'M SCARED.

I'M SO HAPPY THAT YOU LOVE ME...
...BUT MAKING ME YOUR WIFE IS ASKING TOO MUCH.
REALLY? OF WHOM?
...GOD?
I DON'T KNOW...
...PERHAPS...

FOR A LONG TIME I WOULD NOT MAKE LOVE TO YOU...
... BECAUSE I KNEW...
...I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO LET YOU GO ONCE I DID.
I WASN'T WRONG.
WHATEVER HAPPENS, I'LL NEVER LET YOU LEAVE ME.

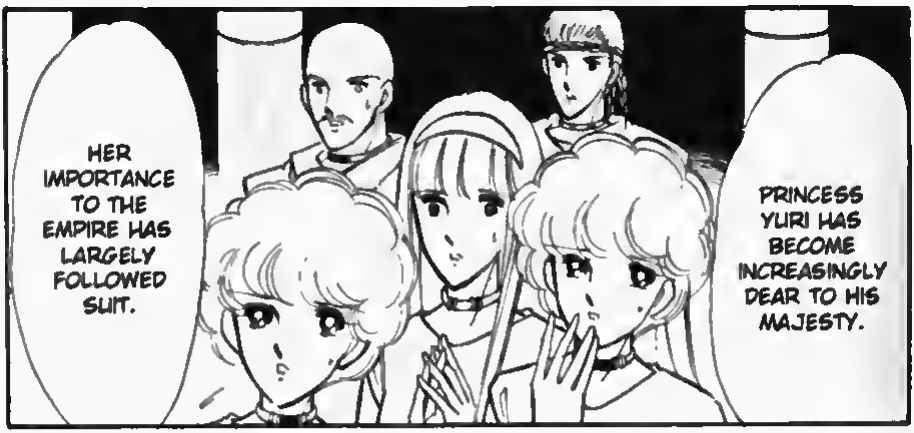

...TO THINK OF LOSING HER. IF I DID...
I NEVER IMAGINED I COULD FALL SO COMPLETELY IN LOVE.
AS FOR GOD, WHAT IS DIVINE DISAP-PROVAL...
...COMPARED TO BEING ABLE TO BE WITH YOU FOREVER?
THE CLOSER I DRAW TO YURI, THE MORE UNBEARABLE IT IS...
I KNOW IT'S A DANGEROUS SITUATION, BUT...
...I'D LOSE EVERYTHING. MY EMPIRE, MY DREAMS AND MY LOVE...
...WOULD VANISH!

...THERE'S NOTHING TO BE DONE ABOUT IT!
GOOD LORD, ILBANI!
YOU THINK THE QUEEN DOWAGER WANTS PRINCESS YURI TO BE THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF...
...SO SHE'LL BE KILLED ON THE BATTLE-FIELD?


...IN SOME SORT OF RITUAL TO ATTAIN POWER. ISN'T THAT SO?
I THOUGHT THE QUEEN DOWAGER NEEDED HER AS A SACRI-FICE...
THAT'S WHAT I THINK.
AS THE LEADER OF OUR MILITARY, PRINCESS YURI WILL BE EXPOSED TO ALL SORTS OF DANGERS.

LIKE... WHAT, SIR?

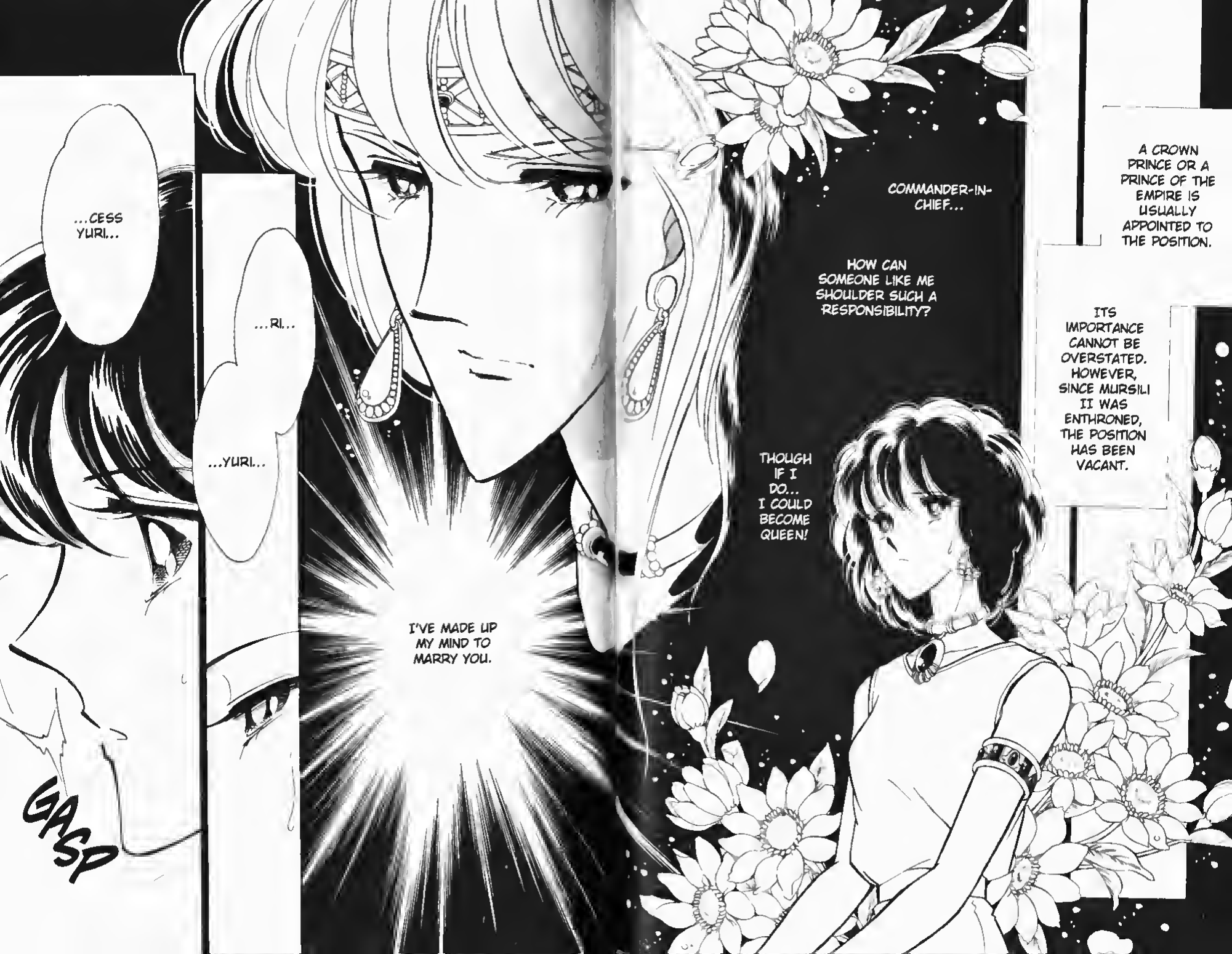
YES, BUT PERHAPS SHE'S SEEN A BETTER WAY TO THAT GOAL.


HER IMPORTANCE TO THE EMPIRE HAS LARGELY FOLLOWED SUIT.
PRINCESS YURI HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY DEAR TO HIS MAJESTY.

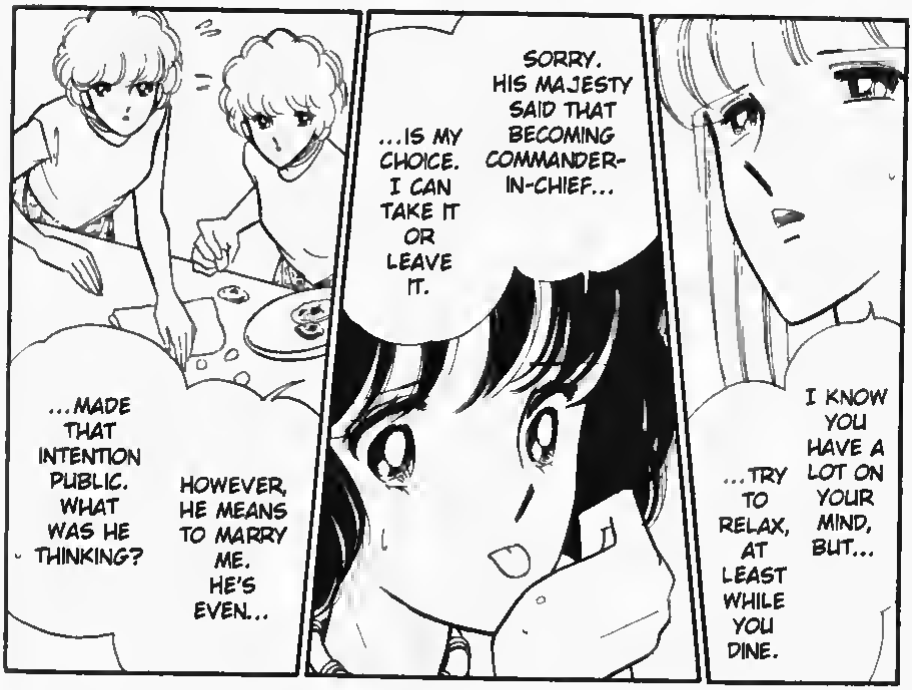
IT WOULD DEVASTATE HIS MAJESTY, AND THE EMPIRE, IF SHE WERE LOST.
TRULY, ALL OUR FUTURES HAVE COME TO REST ON THE FATE OF PRINCESS YURI.
YOU'RE RIGHT, ILBANI!
WE MUST CONVINCE PRINCESS YURI TO REFUSE THE OFFICE!
I THINK... NOT.

NAKIA PLAYED THE ISHTAR ANGLE BRILLIANTLY. IT'S NOW THE ONLY WAY FOR PRINCESS YURI...
...TO BECOME OUR QUEEN. THE ONLY DANGER TO NAKIA...
...IS IF PRINCESS YURI SUCCEEDS. WE MUST, THEN, PRAY THAT OUR ISHTAR WINS THROUGH TO VICTORY.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF...
...OF THE HITTITE MILITARY. THIS INCLUDES LEADING THE ROYAL GUARDS THAT PROTECT THE HITTITE KING.
IN MILITARY MATTERS ONLY THE KING HIMSELF HAS HIGHER AUTHORITY.


...CESS YURI...
...RI...
...YURI...
I'VE MADE UP MY MIND TO MARRY YOU.
GASP
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF...
HOW CAN SOMEONE LIKE ME SHOULDER SUCH A RESPONSIBILITY?
THOUGH IF I DO... I COULD BECOME QUEEN!
A CROWN PRINCE OR A PRINCE OF THE EMPIRE IS USUALLY APPOINTED TO THE POSITION.
ITS IMPORTANCE CANNOT BE OVERSTATED. HOWEVER, SINCE MURSILI II WAS ENTHRONED, THE POSITION HAS BEEN VACANT.

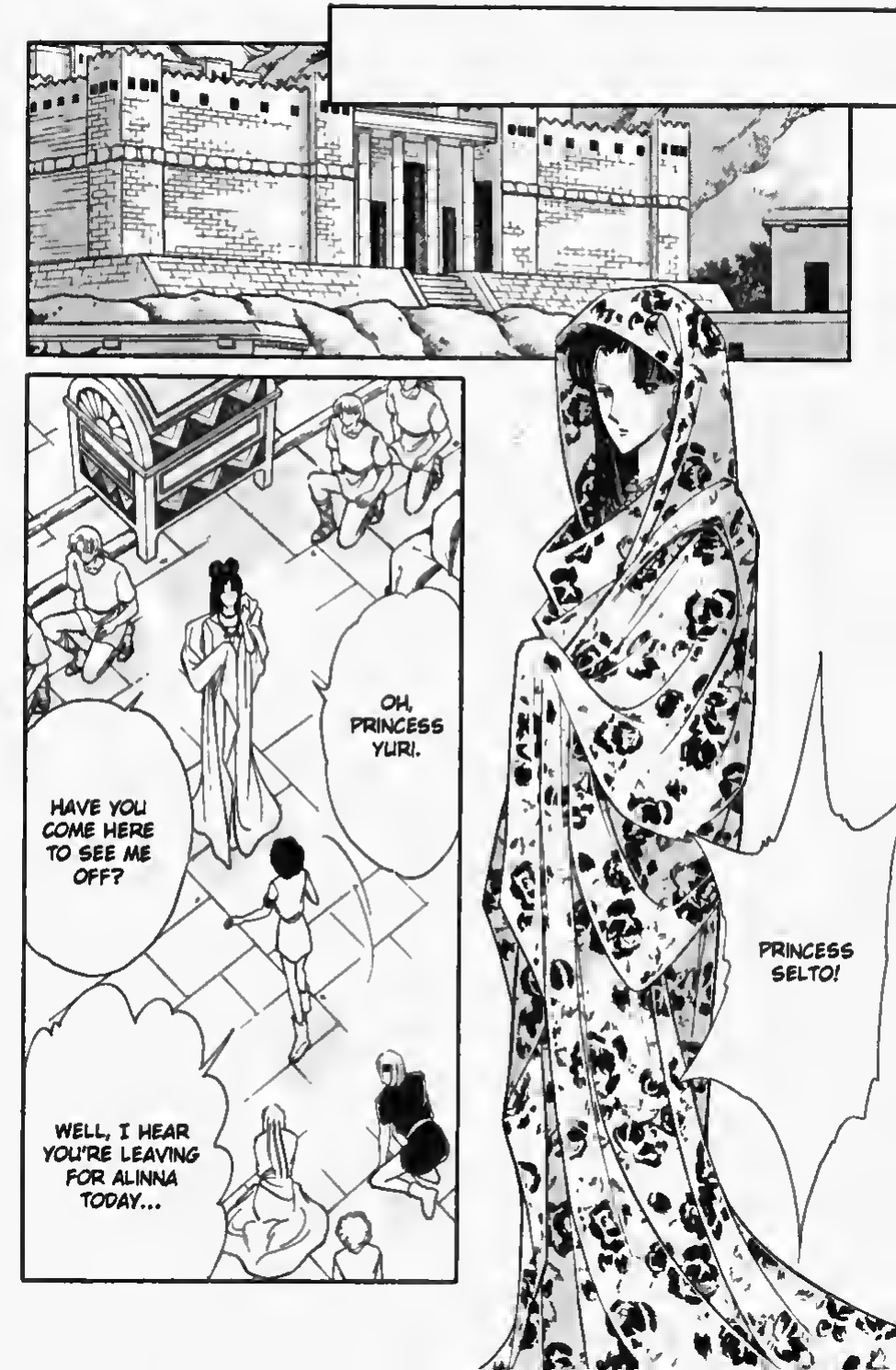
OH!
PRIN-CESS YURI!
YOU'RE DROP-PING YOUR FOOD!

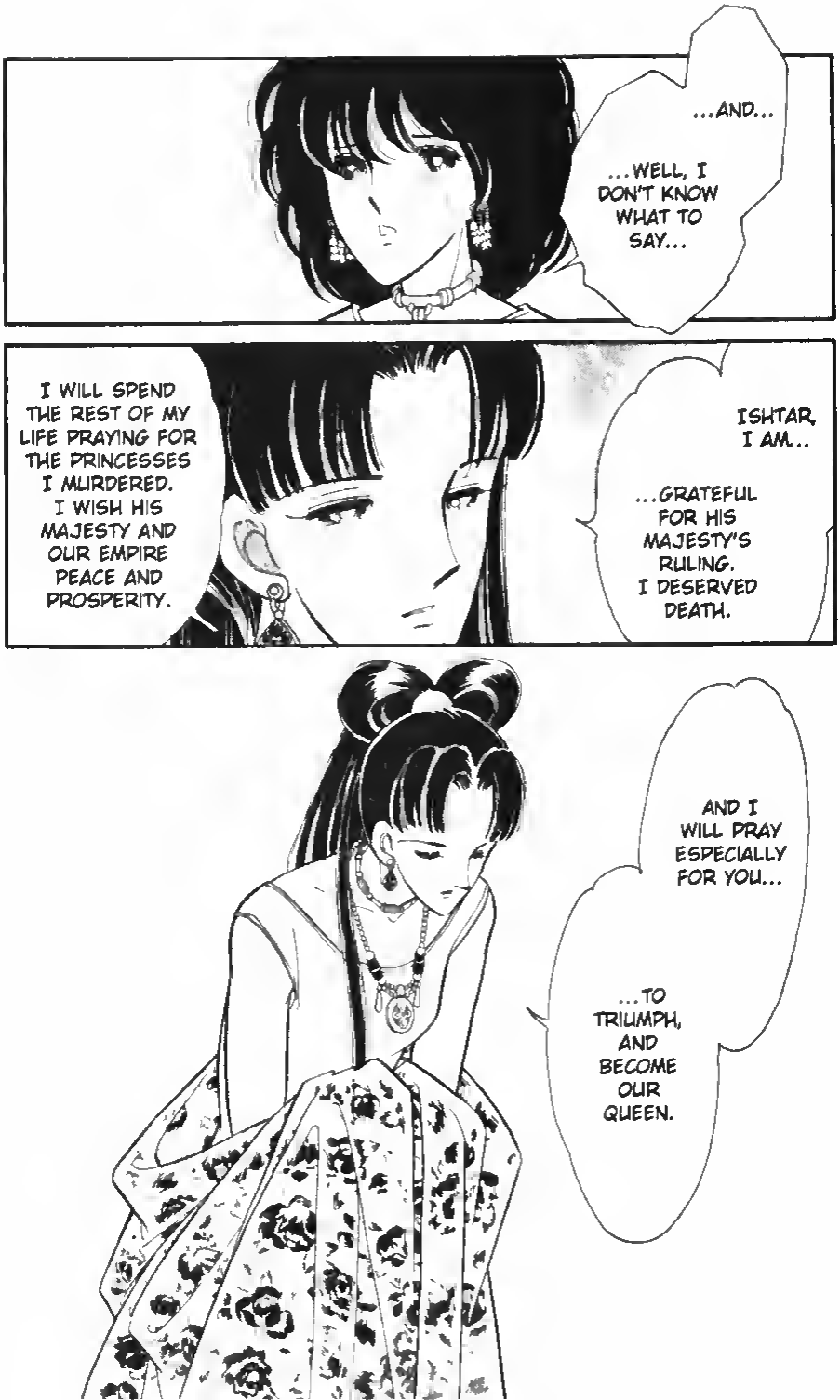

...MADE THAT INTENTION PUBLIC. WHAT WAS HE THINKING?
HOWEVER, HE MEANS TO MARRY ME. HE'S EVEN...
...IS MY CHOICE. I CAN TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT.
SORRY. HIS MAJESTY SAID THAT BECOMING COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF...
...TRY TO RELAX, AT LEAST WHILE YOU DINE.
I KNOW YOU HAVE A LOT ON YOUR MIND, BUT...

PARDON MY INTRU-SION, MA'AM.
KIKKURI? WHAT IS IT?
THAT IS NEWS, KIKKURI!
SO TELL ME, WHAT SENTENCES *HAVE* BEEN HANDED DOWN?!
HIS MAJESTY ORDERED ME TO IMMEDIATELY INFORM YOU OF THIS.
THE SENTENCES OF PRINCESS SELTO AND RUSAFA FOR...
...THE MURDERS AND YOUR ABDUCTION HAVE BEEN HANDED DOWN.

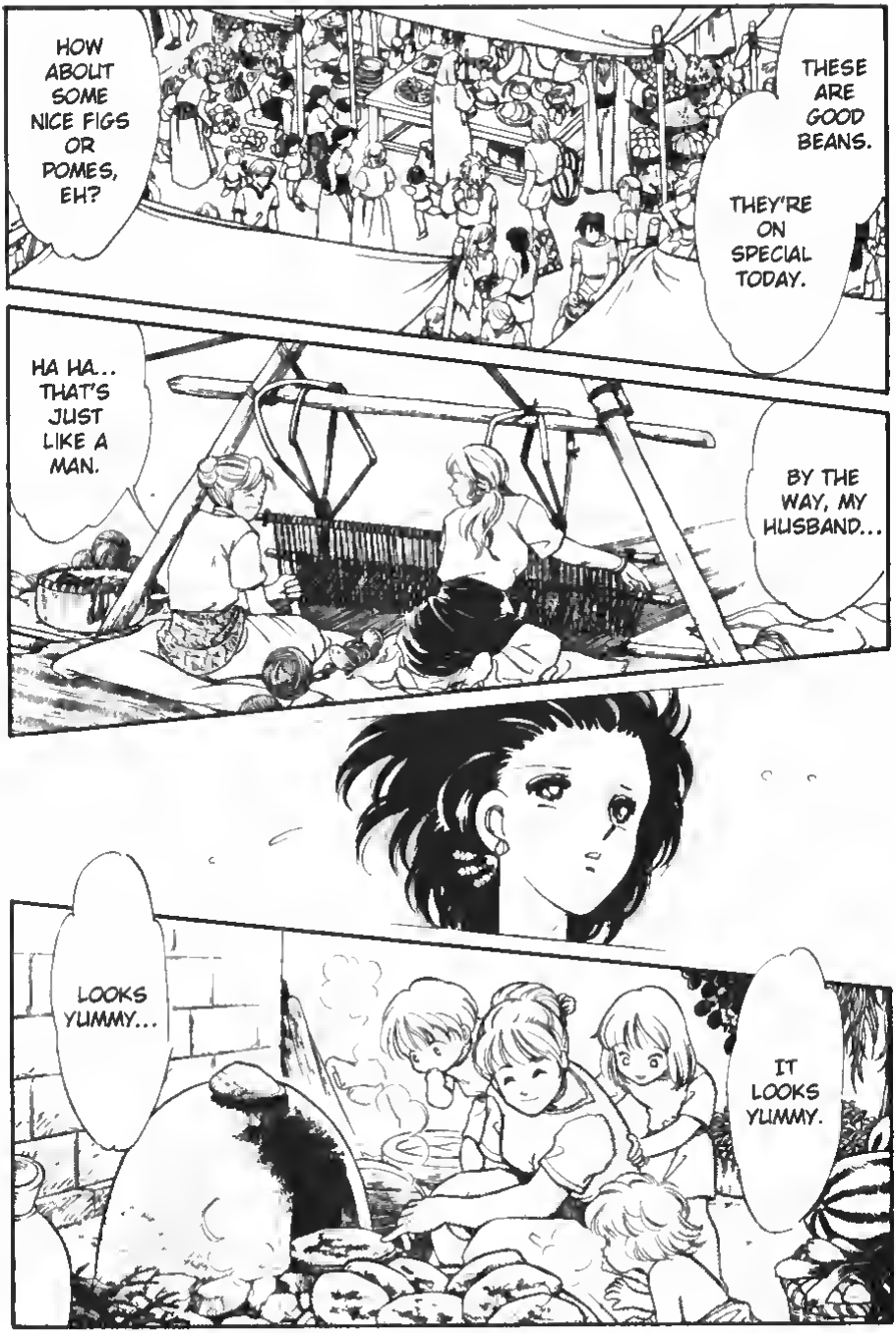
RUSAFA ...
...WILL BE DEMOTED FROM CHIEF OF THE ARCHERY UNIT...
...TO AN ORDINARY SOLDIER. THIS IS QUITE LENIENT.
HE'LL BE DEMOTED ...?
PRINCESS SELTO HAS ALSO BEEN SHOWN LENIENCY...
...AND WILL ONLY BE CONFINED TO A TEMPLE IN ARINNA FOR LIFE.
CONFINED ...FOR LIFE?!
HIS MAJESTY IS SHOWING UNCOMMON MERCY FOR SUCH CRIMES!
A LIFETIME UNDER HOUSE ARREST, HUH?

WHICH PROVED THE VITAL MITIGATING FACTOR.
BUT IT WAS REALLY NAKIA'S DOING...
I BELIEVE RUSAFA IS IN HIS OFFICE PACKING HIS THINGS.
WHAT ARE THEY DOING RIGHT NOW?
PRINCESS SELTO IS PREPARING TO LEAVE FOR ALINNA TODAY.
TODAY?


OH, PRINCESS YURI.
HAVE YOU COME HERE TO SEE ME OFF?
WELL, I HEAR YOU'RE LEAVING FOR ALINNA TODAY...
PRINCESS SELTO!

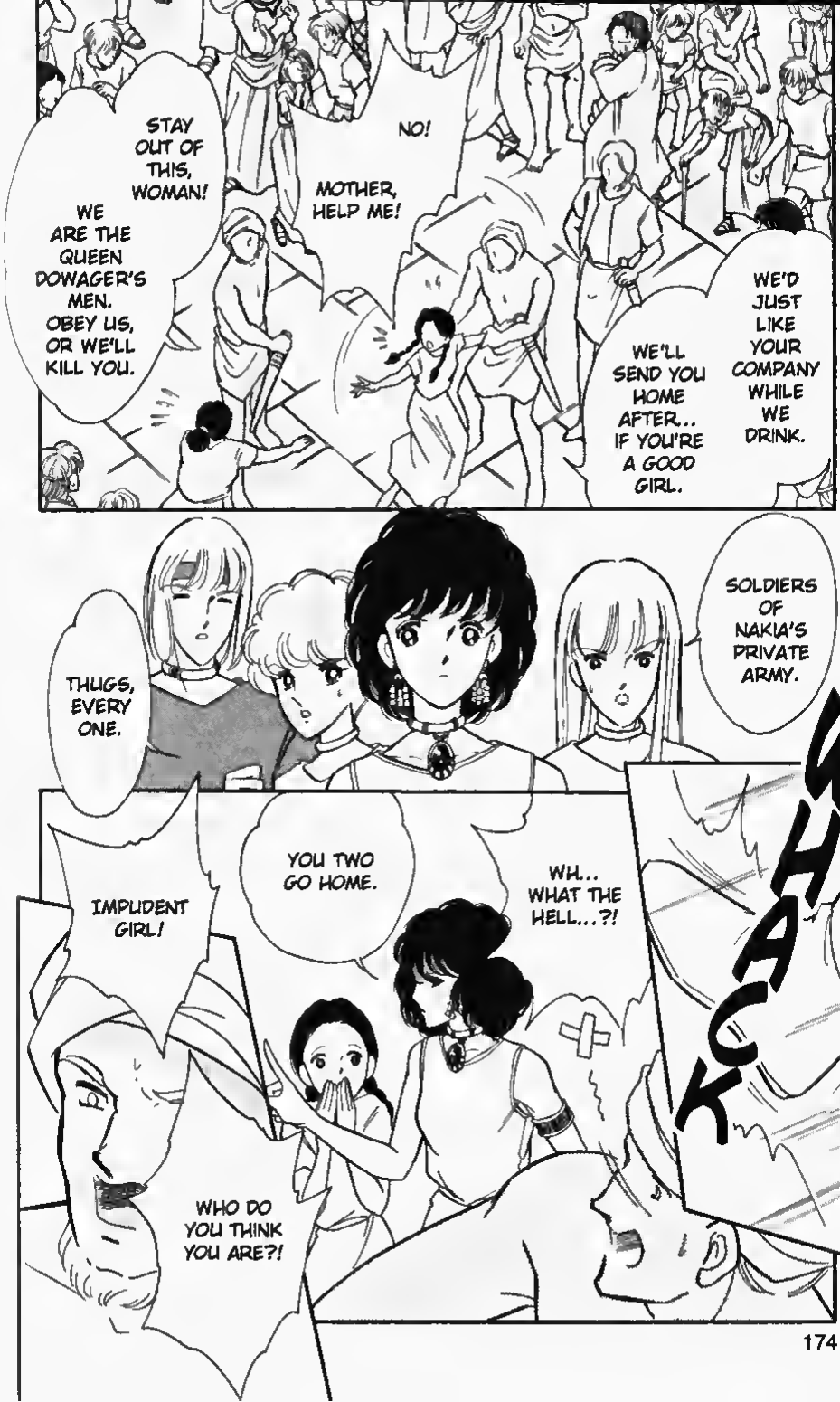

...AND...
...WELL, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY...
ISHTAR, I AM...
...GRATEFUL FOR HIS MAJESTY'S RULING. I DESERVED DEATH.
I WILL SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE PRAYING FOR THE PRINCESSES I MURDERED. I WISH HIS MAJESTY AND OUR EMPIRE PEACE AND PROSPERITY.
AND I WILL PRAY ESPECIALLY FOR YOU...
...TO TRIUMPH, AND BECOME OUR QUEEN.

...HOPES I'LL BECOME QUEEN?
EVEN PRINCESS SELTO...
CACKLE
HA HA HA
CACKLE


HOW ABOUT SOME NICE FIGS OR POMES, EH?
THESE ARE GOOD BEANS.
THEY'RE ON SPECIAL TODAY.
HA HA.. THAT'S JUST LIKE A MAN.
BY THE WAY, MY HUSBAND...
LOOKS YUMMY...
IT LOOKS YUMMY.

KAIL MURSILI II IS KING OF THE HITTITE EMPIRE.
THE WELFARE OF THE HITTITE PEOPLE IS HIS RESPONSI-BILITY.
...HATTUSA, THE HITTITE CAPITAL, IS THE LARGEST AND MOST PROSPER-OUS CITY IN THE ORIENT.
STRETCHING FOUR KILOMETERS NORTH TO SOUTH...
...TWO AND A HALF KILOMETERS EAST TO WEST...

I WOULD SHARE THAT RESPONSIBILITY WITH HIM.
I WOULD SHARE THE BURDEN WITH HIM IF I COULD, BUT...
EEEK!


STAY OUT OF THIS, WOMAN!
WE ARE THE QUEEN DOWAGER'S MEN. OBEY US, OR WE'LL KILL YOU.
NO!
MOTHER, HELP ME!
WE'LL SEND YOU HOME AFTER.. IF YOU'RE A GOOD GIRL.
WE'D JUST LIKE YOUR COMPANY WHILE WE DRINK.
THUGS, EVERY ONE.
SOLDIERS OF NAKIA'S PRIVATE ARMY.
IMPUDENT GIRL!
YOU TWO GO HOME.
WH.. WHAT THE HELL...?!
KCAH
WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?!

...DOING IT AT THE KING'S PALACE.
I'LL ENTERTAIN YOU WHILE YOU DRINK AS LONG AS YOU DON'T MIND...
HMPH!
IS... IS SHE..
IVORY SKIN!
BLACK EYES!
THE... KING'S PALACE?
BLACK HAIR!
BUZZ BUZZ
I SHTAR!
OH, MY GOD!
RAMSES...
...ONCE TOLD ME THAT IN ORDER TO RULE...

I AM JAPANESE, NOT HITTITE.
THAT DOESN'T BOTHER ANY OF YOU?
AND NAKIA'S JUST THE OPPOSITE!
HE'S RIGHT!
...SUCCESSFULLY, A MAN NEEDS A WOMAN...
...WHO IS AS CAPABLE AS HE IS AT HIS SIDE.
THEIR QUEEN DOWAGER, NEFERTITI, IS NOTHING BUT TROUBLE.
IT'S THE SAME IN EGYPT.

PRIN-
CESS
YURI...
...WHAT
DO YOU
THINK I
AM?
HUH?
WELL...
...YOU'RE
HITTITE,
AREN'T
YOU?
YES, I
AM.
BUT MY
HERITAGE IS
HURRIAN.
YOU
MEAN...
...THE
PEOPLE
WHO
FOUNDED
MITANNI?
YES. MY
PARENTS
IMMIGRATED
HERE
BEFORE I
WAS BORN.
...SEVERAL
HUNDRED
YEARS AGO.
AND
ILBANI'S
ASSYRIAN
ANCESTORS
ARRIVED IN
HATTUSA..

BUT AS LONG AS WE LIVE IN THIS LAND...
...WE ARE ALL HITTITES.
AND WE THREE SISTERS ...
...ARE HATTIS BY ORIGIN, YOU KNOW.
...KIKKURI...
HADI...
...RYUI, SHALA...

AS FOR GOD, WHAT IS DIVINE DISAP-PROVAL ...
...COMPARED TO BEING ABLE TO BE WITH YOU FOREVER?
KAIL!

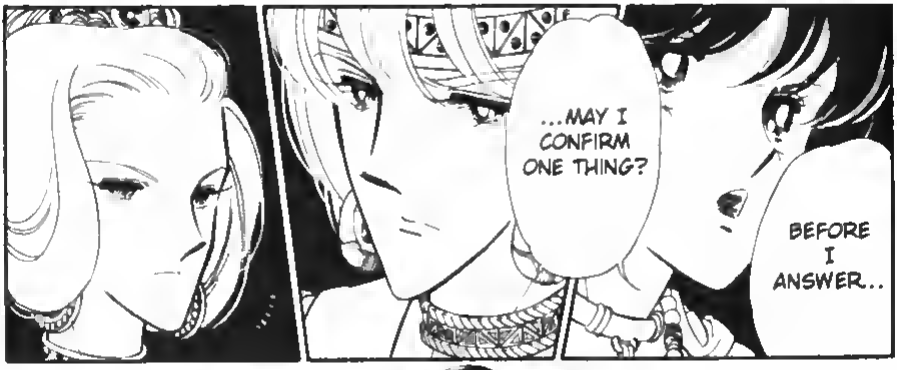
SQUEEZE
PRIN-
CESS
YURI?
ALL
RIGHT...
SHALL I
GO?
PARDON?

RUSTLE

SHALL I GO...
...I AM ABLE TO GO?
...AS FAR AS...

SENATE MEETING
FIRST ON TODAY'S AGENDA...
...IS THE QUESTION OF YURI ISHTAR'S APPOINTMENT AS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE HITTITE ARMIES.

MAY I ASK YURI ISHTAR'S THOUGHTS ON THE MATTER?
HIS MAJESTY SAYS IT IS UP TO ISHTAR TO MAKE THAT DECISION.

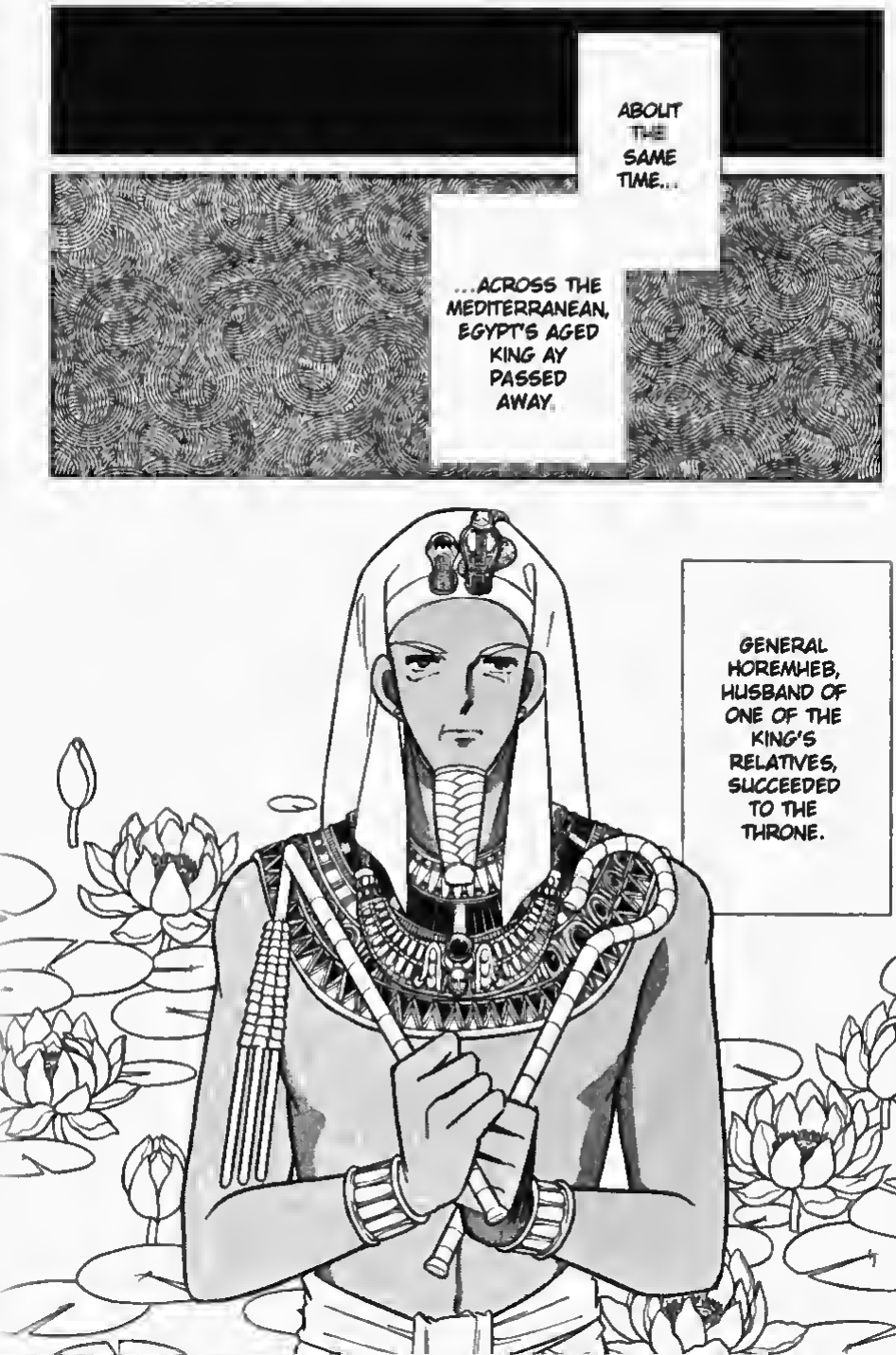

...MAY I CONFIRM ONE THING?
BEFORE I ANSWER..

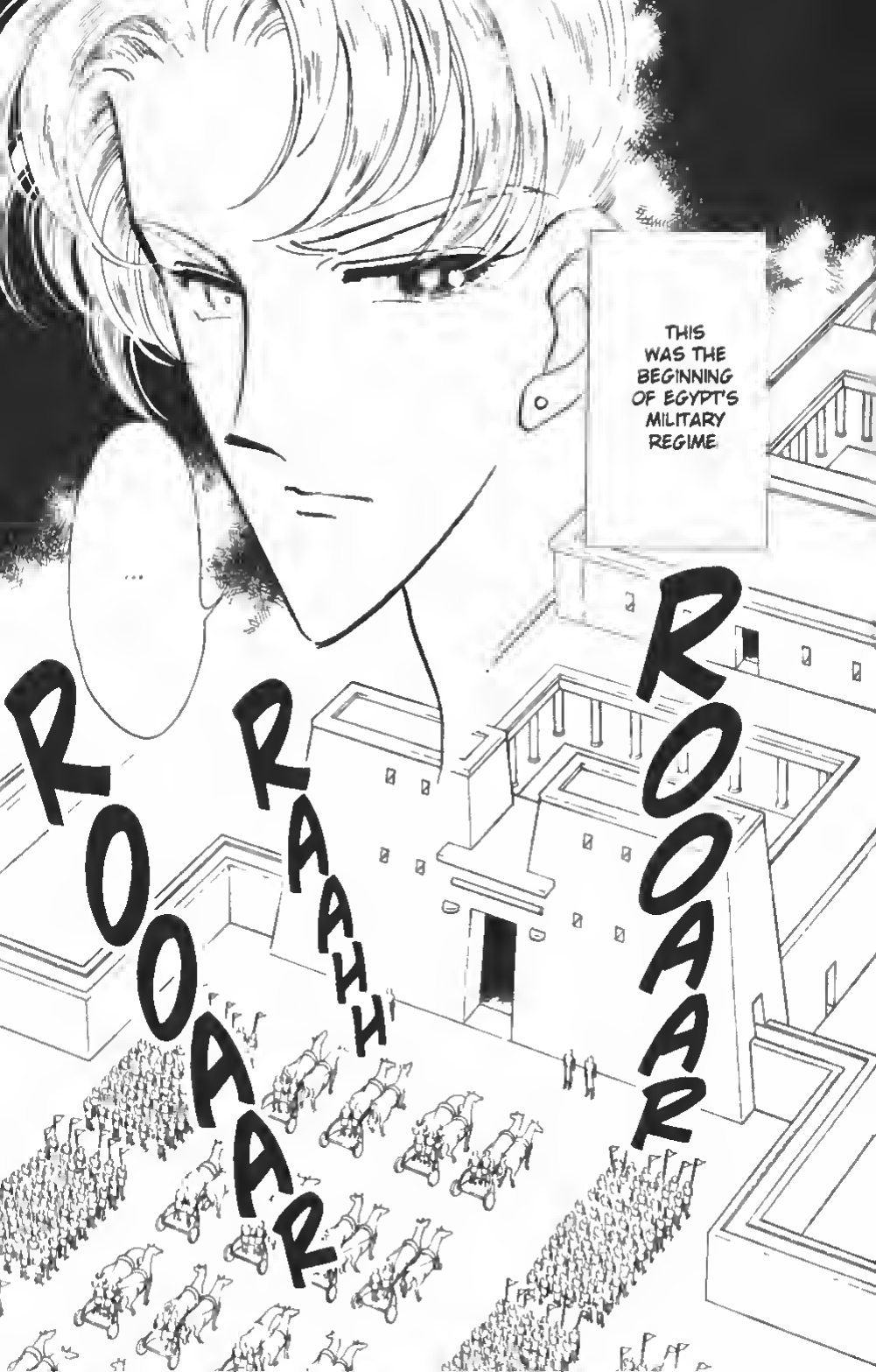
IS THAT STILL THE SOLE CONDITION YOU WOULD HAVE FULFILLED?
YOUR HIGHNESS, YOU SAID YOU WOULD ACCEPT ME...
...AS QUEEN IF I SUCCESSFULLY SERVE AS HIS MAJESTY'S COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

OF COURSE IT IS.
SENATORS? HOW... SAY YOU?
WE HAVE AGREED THAT WE WILL WELCOME YOU AS OUR QUEEN IF YOU RETURN...
...ALIVE AND WELL FROM A SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN AGAINST EGYPT.
IF THAT'S SO, THEN...

...I AM PLEASED AND HONORED TO BECOME...
...COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE HITTITE ARMIES.
YURI...

...IN THE ENTIRE HISTORY OF THE HITTITE EMPIRE.
...THAT IS, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE HITTITE ARMIES, THE ONLY FEMALE TO DO SO...
YURI ISHTAR ASSUMED THE POST OF GAL MESHEDI..


ABOUT THE SAME TIME...
...ACROSS THE MEDITERRANEAN, EGYPT'S AGED KING AY PASSED AWAY.
GENERAL HOREMHEB, HUSBAND OF ONE OF THE KING'S RELATIVES, SUCCEEDED TO THE THRONE.


THIS WAS THE BEGINNING OF EGYPT'S MILITARY REGIME
...
ROOAAR
RAAHH
ROOAAR
ROOAAR

RED RIVER™

Yuri, a teen of the 21st century, has been transported to ancient Anatolia as part of a scheme by the evil Nakia, Queen of the Hittites. Only the intervention of Nakia's stepson, Prince Kail, saved Yuri from the Queen's bloodthirsty intentions. As an unintended consequence, the people of Anatolia are now convinced that Yuri is the incarnation of the great war-goddess Ishtar.

Kail's trusted commander Rusafa, under the influence of Nakia's black water, has made off with Yuri and turned her over to Nakia's henchman Urhi. Kail is not fooled—his suspicions land squarely on Nakia, and he has her placed under housa arrest. Kail then prepares to perform a public prayer, promising the Queen Dowager that she will be put to death if Yuri does not appear by the end of the ceremony. Nakia knows this is no bluff and has Urhi arrange for Yuri's timely rescue, though that very rescue could well lead to the innocent Rusafa's ruin!

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This book reads from right to left.

VIZ media

RATED T+ FOR OLDER TEEN

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